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## EDITORIAL

WRITING of Abbé Couturier in this issue, Dom Ley, of the Anglican community of Nashdom Abbey, has stated that 'the cause of Christian Unity is primarily a matter of the spiritual life'. This phrase may be taken as a justification for the present double issue of *THE LIFE*, which contains very varied approaches to the question of unity. Some of these articles may seem at first sight to have strayed unawares into *THE LIFE*. But we should realize how much depends, in the attempt to re-form a united Christendom, on the unity of the individual soul with God in the heights of prayer. It was the period of the Reformation that called forth St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross. And again a great deal depends on the unity of the individual in himself. Mr Dinwiddy writes from a literary point of view of the modern desire for uniformity and external plans which only serve to hide the disruption within.

To approach the question, for example, of the 're-union' of the Church of England with Rome on the level of historical discussion and of 'give and take' as has sometimes been done in the past only increases divisions and misunderstandings. The deeper level of charity must always come first in the approach to dis-united Christendom. The vital union of the Mystical Body is the 'oneing' of the Christian with Christ in a burning charity which necessarily includes faith and the gifts of wisdom and understanding.

This number should, in fact, have included an article on the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity and of prayer, following St Thomas's teaching on the *RES* of the Eucharist being the unity of the Mystical Body or, in other words, actual charity, the burning love of God and of neighbour. The heart of the spiritual life is of course union, oneness, wholeness. And with these thoughts as a background the reader is invited to discover the theme of the issue.



# CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER AS THE PRAYER OF UNITY

J. CARTMELL

IT is with the intellect that we contemplate. Christian contemplation is an activity of faith, and faith is an intellectual virtue. The gift of the Holy Ghost which plays a leading role in contemplation is wisdom, because, as St Thomas says, it belongs to wisdom, according to Aristotle, to consider the Highest Cause; and wisdom is obviously rooted in the intellect.

But contemplation is also intimately linked with charity and is therefore an activity of the will. This is due, St Thomas explains, to the nature of the gift of wisdom; it implies a connaturality with divine things, and this connaturality can come only from charity. He writes: 'Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law. Now rectitude of judgment is two-fold: first, on account of perfect use of reason, secondly, on account of a certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge. Thus, about matters of chastity, a man after inquiring with his reason forms a right judgment, if he has learnt the science of morals, while he who has the habit of chastity judges of such matters by a kind of connaturality.'

'Accordingly it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about Divine things after reason has made its inquiry, but it belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them: thus Dionysius says (*Div. Nom.* ii) that "Hierotheus is perfect in divine things, for he not only learns, but is patient of, divine things."

'Now this sympathy or connaturality for divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to I Corinthians 6, 17: "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Consequently wisdom which is a gift has its cause in the will, which cause is charity, but it has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge aright.'<sup>1</sup>

The contemplative vision is vague and, as it were, dark. This must be so if, by the gift of wisdom, the intellect is to judge

<sup>1</sup> *Summa* II-II, 1. 45, a 2 (Dominican trans.).

aright; for contemplation is a prayer of faith, and faith is in itself, says St John of the Cross, as dark as night to the understanding, and it has as its object God, who is dark night to the soul in this life by reason of his infinite transcendence and incomprehensibility.<sup>2</sup>

But it is not by the intellect that contact with God is made; love is the bond, as St Thomas explains. The reason is that all our knowledge, even the vaguest, is by concepts; and concepts are representations of the thing known; they are not the thing in itself. We must wait for the *lumen gloriæ* to attain God directly in himself with the intellect. In this life 'knowledge is perfected by the thing known being united, through its likeness, to the knower. But the effect of love is that the thing itself which is loved is, in a way, united to the lover. Consequently the union which is caused by love is closer than that which is caused by knowledge.'<sup>3</sup> The contemplative is aware of an intimacy of love with the divine Lover, and in this love he is conscious of the presence of the divine Lover, usually in a general way, but occasionally, if God so wills, by an experience in the apex or 'fund' of the soul, an experience which St John of the Cross calls a substantial touch of God, 'a most subtle touch which the Beloved inflicts upon the soul at times, even when she is least expecting it, so that her heart is enkindled in the fire of love just as if a spark of fire had flown out and kindled it. Then, with great rapidity, as when one suddenly awakens, the will is enkindled in loving, desiring, praising, giving thanks, doing reverence, esteeming and praying to God with savour of love.'<sup>4</sup>

The union of the contemplative soul with God has been constantly described in terms of marriage. The *Canticle of Canticles* recurs in the writings of the mystics to describe their prayer and its experiences. The soul and God are, as it were, two in one Spirit. The divine Spouse is the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, the Gift of God, his Kiss. The Holy Ghost makes his abode in all souls in grace, infusing into them grace, the virtues and his gifts. 'The charity of God', writes St Paul 'is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.'<sup>5</sup> Even in the remiss, provided they are free from mortal sin, he is operative. But his activity

<sup>2</sup> *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. I, Ch. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Summa* I-II, q. 28, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Spiritual Canticle*, 2nd redaction, St. XXV, 5. Peers' trans., as throughout.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 5, 5.



becomes paramount in the contemplative; in him, to adopt St John of the Cross's imagery, the Spirit breathes not only in the garden of the soul, but through it. 'To breathe into the soul is to infuse into it grace, gifts and virtues; and to breathe through the soul is for God to touch the virtues and perfections which have already been given to it, refreshing them and moving them so that they may diffuse wondrous fragrance and sweetness.'<sup>6</sup> So is the soul made 'patient of divine things', and it becomes a living instrument of the Spirit of Christ.

Clearly, then, contemplative prayer is the prayer of unity with God. Love is unitive, and the contemplative is all aflame with the love of God. This is true, to some extent, even of the lowest form of contemplation, active or acquired contemplation, the prayer of faith. It becomes more and more true, as acquired contemplation passes by God's gift into infused, to develop through various stages until it becomes the lofty mysticism of transforming union, in which 'the soul feels itself to be at last wholly enkindled in divine union, its palate to be wholly bathed in glory and love, and from the very inmost part of its substance to be flowing veritable rivers of glory, abounding in delights'.<sup>7</sup> This living flame, says St John of the Cross, is the Holy Spirit, the soul's Spouse.

From the intimate union of the contemplative with the Holy Ghost, his position and function in the Church are apparent. For the Church is not just a moral body like other societies, with a common aim effected and exhibited by a visible organization. She is the Mystical Body of Christ, and, as such, she has an inner, living, supernatural unity, having its source in the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church as her soul. It is a unity of love in fulfilment of Christ's prayer, 'that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee . . . that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'<sup>8</sup>

He who is the soul of the Mystical Body is the Spouse of the contemplative. The contemplative, therefore, is vital with the very life of the Church. In him the love for which Christ prayed is a living flame; and, since a flame sends out light and warmth, the contemplative cannot but radiate holiness to those around him.

<sup>6</sup> *Spiritual Canticle*, 1st redaction, St. XXVI, 4.

<sup>7</sup> *The Living Flame of Love*, St. I, 1.

<sup>8</sup> John 17, 21, 26.

‘Flammescat igne caritas,  
Accendat ardor proximos.’

‘One day, after Holy Communion’, writes St Thérèse, ‘our Lord made me understand these words of the *Canticle*, “Draw me; we will run after thee to the odour of thy ointments.” O Jesus, there is no need to say, “In drawing me, draw also the souls that I love”—these words, “Draw me”, suffice. When a soul has let herself be taken captive by the inebriating odour of thy perfumes, she cannot run alone; as a natural consequence of her attraction towards thee, the souls of all those she loves are drawn in her train.’<sup>9</sup>

The contemplative is thus a centre of unity within the Church. United with Christ the Head, he intensifies unity around him in the members of the Mystical Body. The devotion which he brings to the Mass and Holy Communion engenders in others a like devotion and a readiness to submit to the sanctifying influence of the great Sacrifice and Sacrament of Unity. And the gift of understanding which activates the contemplative’s mind along with the supreme gift of wisdom enables him to enlighten other minds as to the meaning and implications of the Faith. So too the gift of counsel in the sphere of conduct. This is true even of simple souls who by contemplation have been taught of God. Their mysticism does not make them into learned theologians; but they have a capacity of penetration and of unerring judgment which the learned may envy.

In addition to this limited and in a sense spontaneous influence the contemplative exercises also a world-wide apostolate. The great contemplative orders are not escapist, content to enjoy the shelter of the cloister and leave the world outside to its doom. They know that they exist to bring souls to Christ, to spread everywhere the gentle rule of divine charity. It is not an apostolate of preaching or writing, if they are purely contemplative; it is an apostolate of prayer. In solitude and silence they imitate the night-watches of Christ, praying and suffering and filling up ‘those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in their flesh, for his body, which is the church’.<sup>10</sup> Who shall estimate the power of their prayer? St John of the Cross does not hesitate to assign it unrivalled power. He writes: ‘A very little of this pure

<sup>9</sup> *Histoire d’une Ame*, ch. x.

<sup>10</sup> Colossians I, 24.



love is more precious, in the sight of God and the soul, and of greater profit to the Church, even though the soul appear to be doing nothing, than all these other works (activities in the Lord's service) together. . . . Therefore, if any soul should have aught of this degree of solitary love, great wrong would be done to it, and to the Church, if, even for a brief space, one should endeavour to busy it in active or outward affairs, of however great moment. . . . After all, it was to reach this goal of love that we were created. Let those, then, that are great actives, that think to girdle the world with their outward works and their preachings, take note here that they would bring far more profit to the Church, and be far more pleasing to God (apart from the good example which they would give of themselves) if they spent only half as much time in abiding with God in prayer, even had they not reached such a height as this. Of a surety they would accomplish more with one piece of work than they now do with a thousand, and that with less labour, since their prayer would be of such great deserving and they would have won such spiritual strength by it.'<sup>11</sup>

Zeal, we are told, is to love as the flame is to the fire. He, then, who truly loves God must be zealous for the hallowing of his name and the coming of his kingdom. The love of God and the love of one's neighbour are in reality but one love. To love God is to love those who are made in his image and are redeemed by his blood. Indeed, the love of our neighbour is the touchstone of the genuineness of our love of God; so we are constantly reminded throughout the New Testament. Contemplation, therefore, must of its very nature be apostolic. The great words of Elias, which are the Carmelite motto, *Zelo, zelatus sum pro Domino Deo exercituum*, express the inner meaning of the contemplative vocation, as St Thérèse very clearly understood. With the heart of a missionary, a crusader, a martyr even, like her great Mother and namesake, she realised that she could be all these things, an 'apostle of the apostles', in the hidden life of pure faith. She heard Christ crying from the cross, *Sitio*, 'I thirst for souls'; by a life of utter love—for love, she said, embraces all vocations and is all things—she would quench that divine thirst, by pouring forth the Precious Blood of Jesus upon souls and offering to Jesus these same souls refreshed with the dew of Calvary. This was right in the tradition

<sup>11</sup> *Spiritual Canticle*, 2nd redaction, St. XXVIII, 2, 3.

of St Teresa herself, who emphasized to her nuns that the Reformed Carmel existed to save souls, especially the contemporary souls who had been subjected to, or were threatened by, Lutheranism.

There would seem to be two streams of mysticism in the Church—the one theocentric, and represented in this country by *The Cloud of Unknowing*; the other Christocentric, in this sense at least, that it gives much more prominence to the Humanity of Christ, and represented by Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*. But, although differing in emphasis, the two streams are really one. Every Catholic accepts St Peter's teaching that there is no other name than Christ's whereby we must be saved; that, as he himself said, he is the way, as well as the truth and the life. Every genuine Catholic contemplative finds his spiritual life in and through the Church, her doctrine, her worship and sacraments, and her visible organization. Every genuine Catholic contemplative is a Trinitarian. He realizes that he is 'oned' with the Trinity dwelling within him and that his unity with God is the work of grace. We are of course faced with the problem of mystical prayer outside Christianity, in Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists, in the Mussulman, the Hindu and so on. But, in view of the revealed purpose of God to unite all men in Christ, the answer to this problem would seem to be that such mysticism is the work of grace and has as its aim in God's design the preparing of these souls and those whom they influence for the reception of Christ; God is preparing the ground for the harvest within the souls of men as he once prepared the ground externally by the unity of the Roman Empire in a large part of the then known world. Undoubtedly, there is generally no harvest reaped in these pagan souls. *Fides ex auditu*, and preachers have often not reached them; and when they have, their message has not always penetrated their hearers because those hearers, in spite of the gift of some degree of union with himself that God has given them, are too steeped in inherited prejudices or too much blinded by pride and other passions to see and understand.

In any case, both revelation and right reason disprove the view expressed by certain writers on mysticism—the author of *Grey Eminence*, for instance—that a vague mysticism is the only true religion, that it is one everywhere, in the Christian and in the pagan, that it is alien to dogma and institutionalism, which are



accretions, perverting the religious sense and making it impossible for men to free themselves for unity with the Spirit of all things. Such mysticism is not prayer; it appears to be a form of pantheism, besides inculcating that bugbear of all religious effort, indifference.

'All mankind', writes St Augustine, 'is in Christ one man, and the unity of Christians is one Man.'<sup>12</sup> And again: 'If thou seekest the truth, keep thou the way; for the same is the way which is the truth. The way thou art going is the same as the whither thou are going. Thou art not going by a way as one thing to an object as another thing, not coming to Christ by something other than Christ; thou comest through Christ to Christ . . . through Christ the man to Christ God, through the Word made flesh to the Word which in the beginning was with God.'<sup>13</sup> St Augustine was a contemplative, and not a little responsible for the introduction of Neo-Platonic ideas into Christianity. But he saw that union with the One as taught by Plotinus was in Christianity union with the One who is Three in Persons, with all the enriching and deepening of prayer that this involves, that it can only be such a union, and that it must be attained within and through the Mystical Body, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. That is in sum Christian contemplation. In the supernatural order, which is the only order in which we are placed, this is the only full mysticism; other forms are but shadows of it and are meant by God to lead to it. And it is the only mysticism that can be effectively apostolic, by suffering, which is the cross of Christ, as well as by burning prayer helping to spread the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

<sup>12</sup> *Enarr. in Ps. XXIX*, ii, 5.

<sup>13</sup> *In Joan. Ev. XIII*, 4.

## REACHING UNITY BY PRAYER

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

IT is not difficult to trace in the works of Walter Hilton a direct line of prayer from its inception until it reaches the union of marriage with God. And though for this reason many will be familiar with the plan, it may be convenient to extract the holy Englishman's teaching on the subject from both books of the *Scale of Perfection* and to combine them here into a single and brief account of an English way of prayer.

We may begin with a rather profound definition of prayer as 'naught else but a stying desire of the heart into God, by withdrawing of the heart from all earthly thoughts' (*Scale* i, 25, p. 44).<sup>1</sup> This desire rising direct to God himself is indeed the guarantee of true progress in prayer. Indeed it is impossible often to tell from any other sign whether or no one is praying at all. Distractions and dryness flood the spirit to such an extent that it would seem no corner had been left for prayer. But then the man finds that he still longs for God and that the reason for his misery is the need he feels so strongly for God himself and for divine help. He must have 'a whole and stable intention' (i, 22, p. 39) in order to have the object of prayer constantly before the hungry heart. The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* gives something of the same definition: prayer, he says, 'is naught else but a devout intent directed unto God, for the getting of good and the removing of evil' (*Cloud* c. 39). It is clear that in one sense prayer is simply taking one's bearings and setting one's course as straight as possible towards God the supremely beloved. There must be an object of desire; we must look in God's direction and fill the mind and will with the sense of need, need to be fulfilled in him. It is not a matter simply of looking at a distant object. As soon as the man wants that object with a wholeness and integrity of desire he already possesses the object in part—Hilton says later that this desire is Jesus (ii, 24, p. 258). Our Lord is already present by grace in the mind and will of the man who puts first things first and

<sup>1</sup> All references are to the edition in the Orchard Series with an Introduction by Dom Noetinger (London, 1927).



sets his course for God; and such a man is already at prayer. Much evil may yet have to be uprooted and cast away, but already he is held by the goodness of God, already he prays. When St Thomas discusses the nature of *oratio*, the act of the virtue of religion called generically 'prayer', his article is concerned with the right ordering of means to the supreme end; and this surely is the reason why so much is written about the degrees in the scale of prayer. For the way to complete possession by God is a long way of ever increasing development—or of ever increasing subjection to the matters of divine love. And all that way is prayer, the development of prayer, the marching progress of union with God.

This desire which brings the assurance of true prayer demands expression, not in order to inform God but in order to prepare the soul to receive greater grace as its yearning increases (i, 24). Desire in this way frequently breaks forth into various forms of express demands: 'Teach me to love you', 'Thy will be done', 'Remove this pain or these unpleasant difficulties and temptations'. All such exclamations are the outward manifestation of a prayer which is more or less continually flowing towards God.

But this expressed yearning for God itself requires to be disciplined or 'matured in the wood' in the sense that it has to become more and more subjected to the will of God and so to the common good of all. It is not simply the individual who prays, for the individual is the image of Jesus and a member of his body. Therefore of the two forms of vocal prayer—the Divine Office and personal ejaculations—Hilton speaks first of the prayer of the Church, which is not to be undertaken simply as a bounden duty so that it becomes a burden, but as a joyful and gracious act. The passage is of such value to those who recite the Office that it must be quoted in full:

Therefore thou shalt not say them [the prayers of the Office] hastily or recklessly, as if thou wert evil apaid that thou art bound to them, but thou shalt gather thy affection and thy thought to say them more sadly and more devoutly than any other special prayer of devotion, trowing forsooth that, since it is the prayer of Holy Church, there is no vocal prayer so profitable to thee to use commonly as that is. And so shalt thou put away all heaviness, and by grace shalt thou turn thy need into a good will, and thy bond into a great freedom, that shall be to thee no hindrance to ghostly occupation. (i, 27, pp. 46-7.)

It is important to realize that the whole scheme of Christian prayer is fixed in the liturgy. The personal approach to God never transcends liturgical prayer. The relation of the higher forms of the individual converse with God and that of the Church's official prayer is rather that of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to the gift of Faith. Faith always remains, man never reaches beyond the darkness of belief; but the Gifts of Wisdom and Understanding perfect the faith, making the mind and will respond instantaneously and personally to the divine mysteries. Thus the vocal prayer of the Divine Office if taken up in the right spirit will convey the Christian to the Song of Angels of which Hilton writes so beautifully, i.e. the fruit of the perfect union of charity with the 'onehead of God'.<sup>2</sup> Those who feel that vocal prayer of this sort is mean and to be abandoned as soon as possible will find that their prayers turn out to be no more than an exercise of their own natural wit (i, 28, p. 47). So that if you leave vocal prayer of this sort for the 'higher regions' of quiet and passivity you are likely to be left to your own resources, inventing pleasant conceits—often of a poetic or mystical nature—to stir your thoughts and affections. But this is 'natural wit' rather than a divine action on the soul. There is, in fact, a real danger of making up your own prayers instead of allowing the Church and Almighty God to make up your prayers for you.

Another form of vocal prayer, however, develops instinctively from the formal and corporate prayer of worship. In modern times this prayer is usually referred to as 'ejaculatory' and Hilton describes it as a manner of prayer 'by speech . . . not of any certain special saying . . . when a man or woman feeleth grace of devotion by the gift of God' (i, 29, pp. 49-50). So he will call out for succour and for help and he will show his ailments to God as the sick man to the doctor. In this way the Christian speaks to God as devotion moves; and this of course will lead to the higher stages of prayer, to a very fervent devotion and to a complete turning from sin (i, 30, p. 51). But Hilton suggests that the words used even here are the words of the Bible, particularly the words of David so frequently placed on the lips of every Christian in the recitation of the Psalter in the Office.

Thus by active vocal prayer the Christian is led on to the 'third

<sup>2</sup> cf. 'The Song of Angels' by Hilton, published in *The Cell of Self-Knowledge*. Edited by Edmund Gardner (London, 1910).



manner of prayer which lies in the heart without speech by great rest and softness of the body and of the soul' (i, 32, p. 53). It is only after a great deal of active prayer and penance that this prayer of rest becomes habitual so that the Christian is enabled to pray continually in his heart and to love and praise God without hindrance. Distractions and outward preoccupations are apt to rob the spirit of this precious gift so that he has to be careful to avoid these in so far as he is able and above all to keep his intent and his will clean, that is free from the disturbance of desires for things other than God himself. This prayer of rest is in fact none other than the fire of love and is therefore of the same nature as all the highest experiences of union with God; but they grow out of the Office and this groundwork of desire for God:

Of this manner of prayer speaketh our Lord in holy writ by figure thus: 'The fire of love shall be ever lit' in the soul of the devout and clean man or woman, the which is the altar of our Lord, and 'the priest shall every day at morn lay two sticks' and nourish the fire. That is to say this man shall by holy psalms, clean thoughts, and fervent desire nourish the fire of love in his heart 'that it go not out at any time' [Levit. 6, 12] (i, 32, p. 54).

Distinct from these three manners of prayer Hilton discusses 'meditation' which should follow no rule but rest upon the movement of divine grace and upon the Christian's state of mind (i, 34-6, pp. 58-61). But such ways of organizing and using one's thoughts for the sake of drawing near God are rather the means to prayer than prayer itself. We do not wish to exclude from the different types that of discursive prayer. But the discursive activity presents us with ways of reaching unity wherein perfect prayer consists. It is therefore more convenient to turn here immediately to the second book of the *Scale* where Hilton is concerned in detail with the passive type of prayer called as we have seen 'the prayer of rest' but described later in terms of 'the reformation in faith and feeling'.

Having set about his prayer with desire for God the devout man must not expect to discover this permanent state of love overnight. He will not be re-formed in feeling as well as in faith all at once. Only after biding his time a long while and ruling himself with strenuous penance and practice of the virtues can he dispose himself for this 'feeling of grace' or fire of love (ii, 20, p. 237). Of

course, it is not the man's activity which is fundamental even in the work of preparation. This prayer of waiting already is the work of grace and already has a strong element of passivity within it. Jesus himself does the work of re-forming. This active prayer of preparation does not obtain love as its prize as a merchant by his own active trading can come by his profit. 'Nay, it is not so, spiritually, in the love of God.' But our Lord works by his grace which he freely gives where he will; and man co-operates with that free action.

For this reason it is necessary for the Christian to enter the dark night where his own motives are purified from any selfishness in thinking that he can achieve the higher prayer for himself and by himself. His basic desire has to be plunged in the darkness of faith; and, with all the great mystical writers, drawing very clearly from *The Cloud of Unknowing* and the Dionysian tradition, Hilton includes his treatise on the Dark Night in his account of the ascent of prayer. Indeed, St John of the Cross later echoes the same phrases and descriptions.<sup>3</sup>

The man at his prayer goes forth into the 'good night' when he realizes his own nothingness and incapacity even to pray without that Jesus prays with him. 'Thou art naught else but a reasonable instrument wherein that He worketh' (ii, 24, p. 258). The mystical dark night has been described as 'purgative contemplation which causes passively in the soul the negation of itself and of all things'. In this sense it may be regarded as that aspect of prayer that is almost expressionless and lies in a deep-seated and constant yearning for God which grows more painful as the subject realizes his incapacity to do anything of himself.

'This night is naught else but a forbearing and a withdrawing of the thought of the soul from earthly things by great desire and yearning to love and see and feel Jesus and ghostly things' (p. 261). Without distinguishing the different types of night (active purification of the senses or passive purification of the spirit) Hilton places this one night of purification between two days—the first day is lightened by the false light of the love of this world, the second by the light of the love of Jesus. The night falls after the first day so that all 'bodily creatures' are hid and all 'bodily deeds' cease, that is to say that the false love of this world has to be overcome before the love of Jesus fully dawns, the affections and

3 Compare *Scale* ii, 24 with *Dark Night* I, 1.



thoughts have to be freed before they can awake to the full liberty of being enthralled by Christ.

But the initial stages of this process of detachment are bound to be extremely painful, and it here seems to be suggested that the first stages of the night are those of the more active purification of the senses. The picture that Hilton leaves us is that of a continuous process like that of the passage of night. Other writers often give the impression of a state of darkness in which the Christian remains, a sort of ante-chamber to the secret inner room where he will find his Beloved. But here we might see night falling slowly with a long English twilight in which the Christian at prayer for long can descry the objects around him which give him such delight and from which it is so hard to drag himself. The twilight would be too painful if the man were to strain to enter his own 'blankness', to create a sort of cell in which he might pretend these fast disappearing objects did not exist. He must not strain: 'Abide grace, suffer easily, and break not thyself too much'.

The fact is that the night grows darker the nearer it approaches the dawn. And the darkness is intensified by the awareness of the coming glory of the true source of light. This purification is fundamentally positive; it looks forward to the presence of Jesus. A man is not simply to strain to cut away, but to increase in this desire, the very stuff of prayer, the desire for Jesus. As the twilight finally gives place to the complete darkness of night the senses cease to cling to the old life of yesterday; the heart, which at the first hint of dusk had turned towards a restful waiting for the coming of tomorrow, may now lie wakeful but undisturbed by the outward din of a dying day. As night progresses all the powers of the sleeping earth seem to gather themselves more closely together into the quiet, warm unity of the dark womb in which new life is hid, holding within it the pent-up vigour of the Creator himself. So the Christian lies awake—no dreams, no stirring of a limb, but surely and hiddenly the rise and fall of the rhythm of breath. Breathing unknowingly the love of God:

Then thinketh the soul right naught, for then thinketh it of none earthly thing cleavingly. This is a rich naught. And this naught, this night is a great ease for the soul that desireth the love of Jesus. . . . What thing maketh this darkness? Soothly naught else but a gracious desire to have the love of Jesus (ii, 24, p. 263).

Jesus, then, who is close to the Christian throughout the night, draws nearer and nearer as the painful disturbances of yesterday recede and obscurity descends more restfully.

Now the short vivid flashes of contemplation begin to rouse the Christian to rise up to welcome the new day—'a little touching of contemplation' (ii, 25, p. 268). The second day begins to dawn with the new light which is the love of Jesus. The true sun begins to shine into the soul, a metaphor which is repeated by St John of the Cross in memorable terms: 'As the sun when it rises in the morning and shines into your house will enter if you open the shutter, even so will God, who keeps Israel and slumbers not, still less sleeps, enter the soul that is empty and fill it with blessings' (*Living Flame* iii, 40. Peers iii, p. 83).

But now, as the dawn of Christ's love breaks over the Christian at prayer, the loveliness of the new light of the unseeable Presence becomes so indescribable that Hilton, like many another of his kind, searches about for useful analogies. Many come to mind but all are inadequate; yet to summarize them may give an impression of what the prayer of love is to those who receive it.

Firstly it may be considered as the entry into a beautiful city, the new Jerusalem. There is a strange paradox here; for as the Church sprang up in Roman times it was always found in its more perfect form in the cities where culture prospered. The unsophisticated peasants tilling the soil were the *pagani* full of superstition and directed by crude myths. To become an intelligent and practical Christian it became almost necessary to come into the city. The outer country regions were territories of dark superstition. So, by analogy the Christian approaches God's city where the light of Christian civilization resides, the atmosphere of perfect prayer, and he leaves darkness and superstition behind.

On the other hand, the Christian especially today needs to get out into the surrounding country to replant his roots in the nature around him, to regain the peace of the river passing towards the sea and the rise and fall of summer and winter. So in the analogy the full day of the love of Jesus dawns when the Christian has found his way into the desert away from the sophisticated preoccupations of city life. Nevertheless, city life represents the perfect Christian setting for a man to develop all his capacities both natural and supernatural, a city, that is, which gathers the spirit of the country within its walls, drawing the men of earth into its



civilized streets: 'This city betokeneth the perfect love of God set in the hill of contemplation' (ii, 25, p. 268). The man who goes out into the desert, spurned thereto by his burning thirst for the love of Jesus, may well perceive this new Jerusalem set on a hill in the midst of his desert.

Another way of speaking of this entry into union with God is to use the negative simile of death. A man for whom this new day begins to dawn must become as one dead. 'The world' has utterly disregarded him and forgotten him as a dead man; for 'he may not live to God fully unless he die first to the world' (ii, 27, pp. 279-80). This death to the world, so familiar a figure of speech in the writings of St Peter and St Paul, has many characteristics of the 'good night'; for it is not merely a question of ridding oneself of attachment to outward objects. This 'twilight' applies equally to the interior senses of a man, and to his whole way of prayer. Thus even the precious gift of his imagination, wherein the thoughts of his mind are received in human soil so that they may grow up as works of poetry, even the imagination, in one sense, has to die and darkness descends in these lightsome places of a man's spirit. Imagination gives place to strict reasoning; reasoning in its turn has to give place to the direct touches of faith. All that is precious precisely as human has to be abandoned so that it has the character of a death of a human being.

This is the common teaching of St Thomas (II-II, 180, 6 ad 2), and of St John of the Cross (cf. *Ascent* II, 13 and *Dark Night* I, 9). Picturing and reasoning in prayer have to be abandoned not by any kind of human suicide. A man does not refuse to use his imagination or his discursive reasoning. But twilight gives place to night, and his human spirit dies within him as the things of beauty in the words of the psalms, or the cunning descriptions of the human activities of Christ in the Gospels cease to stir a spark of prayer. In fact, the twilight itself is caused, according to Hilton, by 'the shadowing of our Lord Jesus Christ over a chosen soul, in the which shadowing the soul is kept from the burning of worldly love' (ii, 30, p. 299). For our Lord's manhood shines in the light of his divinity, and as man comes to love Jesus in his manhood, so does he approach the divine light but still in a human way. This is good indeed; but not yet the new day. The human form of Jesus is an object of love and under that shadow do we begin to enter into the night. His human form leads us on to die with him, and

it is only in the darkness of the Crucifixion that we are really brought to the brightness of the new day of divine love. St Mary Magdalen's experiences make all this clear:

Mary Magdalen loved well our Lord Jesus before the time of his passion, but her love was much bodily and little ghostly. She knew well that he was God, but she loved him little as God, for she could not then; and therefore she suffered all her affection and all her thought to fall on him as he was in form of a man. And our Lord blamed her not then, but praised it much. But after when he was risen from death and appeared to her, she would have worshipped him with such manner love as she did before; and then our Lord forbade her and said thus: 'Touch me not'. . . . Touch me not so, but set thy thought and thy love in that form in which I am equal to the Father—that is the form of the Godhead—and love me, know me, worship me as God and man godly, not as man manly. . . . (ii, 30, pp. 300-1).

Here indeed we find that death has lost its sting, that the twilight is the gentlest time of the old day as it leads on to the night and the expectancy of new light. So another metaphor of a like nature is brought forward, that of 'opening the inner eye of the soul' in the midst of this darkness, as one begins to detect the touchings or shinations of Jesus's brightness.

Metaphors and analogies, however, must now give place in the darkness of imagination and reasoning to the direct approach of Reality itself. Just as the author of *The Cloud* had insisted on the false use of metaphorical words, so Hilton tackles the spatial metaphors 'Above', 'Within', or physical ones such as 'Light'. At first these necessary analogies keep the Christian in the twilight of prayer, but as his inner eye is opened he begins to enter into the spiritual meaning and so to reach a 'naked understanding' or 'naked trowing' which is the beginning of contemplation (ii, 33, pp. 316-6).

Now indeed the new day begins to dawn, the new life to stir amid the bones of death. 'Formed' love which is the virtue both acquired and infused of loving God is transformed by 'unformed' love which is the Holy Ghost himself. So the man at prayer becomes the true lover, not simply because he exercises his will in the occupation of loving God, but because God who is love gives himself in return. What need now of discourse and involved

imagery! It is at the time of betrothal that lovers must forever express their love in delightful words, in pictures that captivate the imagination and so cause the heart to move quicker towards the Beloved. Betrothal is the time of sweet poetry, of many words. But when the love of each is not simply being offered but received, then words cease. When union is perfected in wedlock, when love is taken rather than given, when the wedded union leads to the death of a self-forgetting gift of self, then two loves become one love. When unformed love comes himself, the Spirit of God, to occupy the heart of man, when the Spirit penetrates the outer defences of human poetry and the manful struggles of reasoning, then the quietness of night becomes the same as the brilliant flash of the Sun; here the lightsome darkness of two in one Love descends upon the heart of man, and 'we do right naught but suffer him and assent to him' (ii, 34, pp. 321-2). And when the voice of Jesus speaks softly without an uttered word, then the heart of man is stilled and he lays aside all that he is doing or saying or praying, and listens, lying motionless in the depths of that night (ii, 44).

This is the language of the true mystic of all centuries, the language of St John of the Cross as much as of Hilton, the language of divine union in terms of marriage [Compare *Scale* ii, 41 with *Living Flame* iii, 35, etc.]. The presence of the bridegroom brings a great stillness and silence, a new type which is of divine origin and akin to the Spirit of God, the *Silentium Divinum* in which Christ himself was conceived; he brings rest and unity, a gathering of all powers so that the Christian goes forward with boldness and without fear of error or deceit to a solitude which is filled with Love personified.

All this is the perfection of prayer, and with St Thomas, Hilton explains it in terms of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It does not mean that the many words of David's poetry are to be forsaken in fact, nor the pictures and parables of the Gospels left behind. But once the Holy Ghost has come to fulfil the Christian's desire—that foundation of true prayers—then all these things are seen and used in unity. The new light of wisdom and understanding breaks upon the *Pater* and the psalter. The prayer of the liturgy continues but in a new way. The whole psalm, the whole Mass is gathered into one in Jesus; these words are tasted savourily and softly. They may not form the fullness of contemplation, but they are all a part of contemplation (ii, 42). So the prayers continue to hold up the



Christian, to support him in this dark meeting place of love.

Again, all the doctrines of faith which at first seemed to be so multiple and diverse in their variety as the Christian chose first one and then another in his efforts to discover a suitable subject for meditation. But now in wisdom he begins to see the whole hierarchy of the universe in one glance, to see all things in the divine presence. For every message of truth felt with 'inly savour and ghostly delight is a privy whisper of Jesus to the ear of a clean soul'.

And all these gracious knowings felt in a soul, of the universe of all creatures in manner beforesaid, and of our Lord Jesus maker and keeper of all this fair universe, I call them fair words and sweet speakings of our Lord Jesus to a soul which he would make his true spouse. (ii, 46, p. 398: cf. c. 43-46.)

In this way does Hilton show us how by prayer the Christian may enter the fullness of the love of Jesus; how death to the world leads to regaining all in Christ; how the heights are scaled in the life of a simple English priest and of those who would be taught by him to listen to 'the voice of our Lord Jesus assaying the harts' (Ps. 28. ii, 46, p. 397). So he describes the single path of prayer as seen in the vision of an Englishman at prayer.

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## UNITY

HUGH DINWIDDY

THERE is a limited pleasure to be had from neatness. Neatness at home and uniformity at work, both interpenetrating each other, are the modern substitutes for unity. They are habitual, even virtuous. The several relations between them are governed, not only by the overflow of factory method, business method and military method into the home, but also by the simple necessity, where many live in a narrow space, to stow things away, to be tidy. Here we witness an order that is *imposed*. Behind this lies the mountainous pile of things and information, and our own diminished understanding of their true relations.

In its extreme form, we can speak of this imposed order as Day Lewis did in 1929 in *The Transitional Poem*, of

The tetragonal  
Pure symmetry of brain.

This unnatural, not to say inhuman, stamping of life with geometrical patterns draws out of a man, on the one hand an 'acquired instinct' that enables him to live among them at all, and, at the same time, an urge to find the human again by way of this patterned living, which is the only life he knows, and from which there seems to be no escape. Thus a modern game can be interpreted as a picture of man seeing how far he can go within the tetragonal scheme of things on a billiard table, within walls, or on a football ground. The winner is he who has the more flexible control within the limits of the game itself, and the master player is he who controls, not only a ball and an opponent, but may almost be said to ignore, in his control over them, the limits themselves. We speak of him as being *in* his element; he has made the imposed order of tetragonal white lines, or the symmetry of a billiard table or squash court his own natural order, and the process is in the form of a discovery. Indeed, when we say that he 'ignores' the rules and pattern of his game we do not imply that he forgets them, but that he *uses* them so skilfully, so freely that he is always thinking beyond them. Thousands come to see him exercise his skill in this way, and one of the reasons why a

well-played game fascinates people today is that it is a picture of men moving in their element, who transform the tetragonal into a true unity. For though games are becoming better organised, which tends to mean more machine-like, the human factor in a game is striving all the time to find as much freedom as possible within the pattern. Here is a unity nourished by variety, wherein the variety enriches the accepted laws by having always a truly human relation with them. And, though games are mock battles detached from the stream of life, they have in them the principles of organic unity which the world of industrial work has so signally lost.

The games player discovers that he is 'at home' in his artificially made environment, even as the ordinary citizen discovers that he is *not* at home in his. By analogy the artist makes the same kind of discovery as the games player when he finds his true relation with his medium and his subject. He is 'in his element', at one with it. This too is the discovery a man makes when he is married, or has a religious vocation. He accepts, and, in accepting, transcends the limitations. Here, in general terms, is the vocational life; here is the growing Christian life.

Yet, in modern terms, to accept the tetragonal entails becoming a slave to it; though the surrender of freedom and the apparent unity with one's fellows looks, at first sight, like the old ascetic training towards a community life, it is not so. It cannot be used creatively, and there is nothing reciprocal in the routine it demands. Like everything else that is rigid it smacks of death. In contrast, the athlete is the figure of life, the man who has shown that a 'break-through' is possible—but, in an unreal world. In a game there is an easily understandable blend between reason and instinct, which, in art, is only discernible by the trained eye.

There is, however, a particular kind of modern beauty which we can describe as 'easy beauty', as of a problem, that, once solved, no longer fascinates the eye. It is the facile beauty of trying to look like a film star, of masks, of vogue words, of mass-produced ornament. Here again we accept a pattern, in a sense, impose it upon ourselves, and may perhaps feel or think ourselves temporarily into becoming one with it. There is a beauty of pathos in this 'imitation', as in bad Church art, but not in the thing itself, only in the fact that man over-values it. In itself it is an 'appearance', and the satirist uses it—making mocking imitations



of the imitations—like Ruth Pitter, striking them into life:

From yonder gents' department smirks a face

Replete with every artificial grace . . .

She uses it in the hope of making her protest a way through to a discovery of the heart. Man was not made in the image of a tailor's dummy. Here is a neat, formal imitation of a man 'dressed as for an Ascot holiday', but having no unity. The break-through of the artist is always towards the inner core of unity, from which all that has not found its true shaping principle, is shown to be absurd, a house divided against itself.

Thus, much of modern painting and music reflects this division between form and content in modern life . . . is indeed a series of forms reaching out for a true union with content. It is, at present, over-intellectualized and reflects the broken unity at the centre of man's being, the split between reason and instinct, that the modern situation has opened up. Yet, as we know, and as Eliot has written:

Only by form and pattern,

Can words or music reach

The stillness. . . .

And he instances the perfect coherence of a Chinese jar. But although the positive unity of coherence between form and substance is the flowering of art, there is today the opposite and strongly intellectual movement away from this traditional marriage into an isolated world of forms—into the very roots of art. Here we think more of a unity of equilibrium, in which, for instance, forms in a picture, abstracted from nature stand almost as objects in a room. This kind of thing, found in a Ben Nicholson picture, resides at the opposite pole to the positive statement that arises when form and content meet in coherent unity. Yet, in each case, the artist makes a break-through, and John Summer-son, writing of Ben Nicholson, describes interestingly that artist's break through to the unknown.

It is a creative power of an unusual kind: it is a power to deny, discard and eliminate, in pursuit of reality: it is the power to realize a live idea by stripping away the dead ideas which lie around it: it is the power of turning one's back resolutely on the known in order to grasp the unknown. This power is rare—much rarer than that imaginative productiveness which is also

. . . 'creative power', but is, psychologically, a different thing altogether.

And by 'imaginative productiveness' he understands 'the easy availability of unconscious experience, as wit or imagery (in literature) or invention (in music)'. Ben Nicholson chooses *not* to use this power which can lead to easy beauty, or, if used supremely well, to a great positive statement in art. His is the way of a hermit, but it is not so rare as John Summerson claims. His elements are canvas and paint, and his end is to make a correspondence between an abstract idea carried to its furthest point, and external reality . . . simply that, by the way of negation, and to achieve a balance of form, that, short of drawing a circle, is the most simple construction possible to put into space. In a letter, quoted by John Summerson, Ben Nicholson describes a visit to Mondrian, the Dutch abstract painter, in his Paris studios in 1934. He concludes, 'the feeling in his studio must have been not unlike the feeling in one of those hermit's caves where lions used to go to have thorns taken from their paws'. Ben Nicholson is in an isolated position, but it is also a starting point for those coming after him, for he has bequeathed them an abstract of the unity in nature that all need to find.

In general the way of denial which his art entails is now felt by many to be a necessary forerunner to positive speech. Indeed, until the last act of *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot's drama was the drama of the negative approach, and, in that play, the conversion of Edward and Lavinia dates from the moment when they recognize the bond of nothingness between them. The Psychiatrist is speaking:

And now you begin to see, I hope,  
How much you have in common. The same isolation.  
A man who finds himself incapable of loving  
And a woman who finds that no man can love her.

They have to turn their back resolutely on the dream they have been living, and which has died; while, facing them, are the desert bones of nothingness. But this is the starting point for their way back to unity.

And, in accepting a state of nothingness, our disunity, we recognize our dependence upon God and upon society. Here, if we can see it, is the correspondence too between our Lord on the Cross and ourselves. We have to discover, by the way of negation,

the humility of the Cross, and the 'drama' lies in the adventure of breaking through to the unknown. In the *Sea and the Mirror* Auden makes Alonso say:

Thank the bitter treatment of your time  
For the dissolution of your pride.

At such a moment the Crucifix alone has true significance. It is indeed *the* starting point, for herein is the death of nothingness overcome.

Modern literature is notable for its 'starting points', which imply *not* that man, the individual, is henceforward going out to conquer his environment, to knock down the impersonal forces of authority. Indeed, man is continually being told by psychologists that he cannot act as an individual. Hence we have to find, by suffering, the true relation we have with society. 'We cannot choose our world' is a repeated theme in Auden's poetry: we have to accept it. In fact, for the Christian, this entails seeing it in relation to eternity, seeing the Crucifixion, as Salvador Dali seems to have suggested, as a bridge between heaven and earth. If ever there was a valid sign for us, this particular view of the Crucifixion is it. It is the narrow way to which all ways lead. 'We cannot choose our world. . . .' We do *not* choose our world, for we seek another, and much of modern literature is concerned with this search. As Christians, we have to try to see where these searches are leading. We live in a labyrinth, and require the visionary radiance of Traherne or Edwin Muir for,

. . . underneath

The soot we saw the stone clean at the heart

As on the starting day. The refuse heaps

Were grained with that fine dust that made the world.

Our acceptance arises out of seeing beyond, and is the ground of all purposeful action. At the end of *Family Reunion* Harry declares:

And now I know

That my business is not to run away, but to pursue,

Not to avoid being found, but to seek.

Once we can know of our dependence upon something real, then we are ready for a love grounded in humility, and the drama, as we have said, lies in the problems encountered in our break through to the unknown. It is a question of recognition, a meeting, in which man sees both God and himself. Broken by dreams



and impersonal fate, he sees for the first time how he can become a unity, which is to say how the *union* of soul and body in the human person can indeed be a unity. He sees how he can be *in* his element, knowing and loving familiar things, seeing them freshly under this new baptism of acceptance.

Every age has to find the means of renewing itself, and this is the modern way. It produces the new hero, the man who breaks through the crust of civilization and apparent unity, to the world where he belongs. He is a conspirator, a rebel searching for a correspondence between his human need and the society in which he lives. But, as St Augustine writes in *De Beata Vita*, 'nobody seeks to find what he does not wish to find'. . . and there are many who break through, but who do not recognize the need for the Christian starting point, who do not use the loneliness of deprivation and dependence as a starting point for love. How, indeed, can we expect them to do so in a world of broken unity? The modern hero is at the opposite pole to the powerful and isolated renaissance hero, for he speaks in terms of 'teach me to sit still', and he asks, as in *The Sea and The Mirror* . . .

Can I learn to suffer

Without saying something ironic or funny about suffering?

He has to achieve, as in the last words of the *Four Quartets*,

A condition of complete simplicity

(Costing not less than everything).

Only thus, among the clash of creeds, can we hear the word of truth that is the unifying word, only thus can we see the order in things, only when we have seen can we act personally, so that the correspondence between God, society, and man becomes, in man, a growing, transforming power. Out of this sense of correspondence arises the unit or group, which is a meeting of persons who recognize the same starting point in the same field of activity. And, even as hermits became monks by accepting a common unity of worship, so have we, in families and in groups to accept each other. Herein lies the organic in society, the field for the operation of variety in unity, and this corresponds to our need.

Many outside the Church explain the number of conversions to Catholicism by showing the need, with the disappearance of the old forms of individuality, that men and women have to be told what to believe and how to act. In this sense the Church is seen to

be as impersonal and tetragonal as any other modern institution. They are, indeed, partly right in this, and, in an age of impersonal power, the greatest danger the Church has to face is not that of being persecuted, but of becoming herself impersonal. Yet, if the neophyte has undergone any kind of conversion at all, he must have turned towards the personal, and felt the unifying and transforming love of God in his life. Again, a break-through of the outer crust has to be made before one can experience the discovery of a Personal God, before one can, not only know truth, but love it. The drama of life in the world is a constant preparation for this discovery. It strips a man of reservations and leaves him in the simplicity of a commitment: 'Not my will, but thy will be done.' For this is the heart of a conversion: it is the starting point and the turning point. It is here that we lose our 'individuality', in order to find unity. It is from here that we can make the invocation with William Foree Stead:

Flow down, O Uriel, flow down, and then  
Come welling up, and know Thyself in me.

With this in mind, it is interesting to note how existentialist thought, in an attempt to find unity between man and his fellows, has made a bid to reaffirm the individual in society. Camus, with his belief in man and disbelief in Providence and in the destiny of man, has made his break-through from prison to freedom, without recognizing any other 'beyond' except that of freedom exercised within the limitations of this world. Indeed, being held *within* the finite is necessarily as tetragonal as the more obvious façade of standardized values through which he has broken. We are all, today, looking at the same picture of disunited man, a refugee, lost in a world of appearances, moral neutrality, falsehood and nothingness. In this context the existentialist is the last in the line of persons to assert his individuality, not in isolation, but in terms of his world within a world. From this he can see no way through to God, and he is determined not to make the mistake of the Romantic, who separates thought from action, and then is driven to substitute action for thought. As Richard Wollheim writes in the *Cambridge Journal*, the attitude of the Romantic in existentialist terms, is: 'If we cannot decide how we ought to act, then let us act. If a problem cannot be solved intellectually, then surmount it in practice. By *doing*, by *effecting* things, an attempt is

made to cover up what in existentialist thought is called the *mauvaise foi* of the agent, his refusal to choose. . . .

The endeavour of the existentialist is to find a position from which, even in the absurdity of his lot in the world he did not choose, he can make a choice. And any choice is made in the name of others sharing his predicament. This may be seen as an attempt to assert individuality, and, perhaps, heroic responsibility with regard to a unity of understanding with others, but the pattern of behaviour of the rebel, when his rebellion has proved successful, we unfortunately know only too well. Thus we have seen the wheel turn full circle. We have here the picture of the man who has mistaken revolution, and the many turning points it entails, for conversion. Fearing the repetition of the rebel-come-dictator relation, M. Camus declares the necessity, in his most recent book, of retiring from the scene, strengthened only by the knowledge that he has behind him the proven means of revolt which he can use again if necessary. This would hardly seem to be a tenable position. Indeed, the dilemma of fighting for 'man' with a philosophy of action and then of having to live in inactivity with the same philosophy can scarcely be resolved in real terms. With its insistence on living for the moment, this way of life could become a game or an art. Perhaps, though a cul-de-sac, it is another waiting position, and one from which the existentialists may be compelled to make a radical revision of their assumptions, and one from which they may break through from the world they have made themselves to a true relation with reality.

We have attempted to examine some of the ways that the familiar isolated individual, confronted by systems, faces his lot. He is the same person who went down before the totalitarian violence in the inter-war years, and who continues to wrap his life round the 'impregnable centre' of which Stephen Spender wrote in *The Trial of a Judge* in 1938.

Yet I believe [says the Judge at the end of the play]

That if we reject the violence

Which they use, we coil

At least within ourselves, that life

Which grows at last into a world. . . .

But if we use their methods

Of lies and hate, then we betray

The achievement in ourselves. . . .



Since our need is to make a world, a common unity among men, if we can come to the point of recognizing the form of the image of God amongst us, by correspondence, by the knowledge that if we are victims he is The Victim, then, with humility, we can begin. It is to this 'impregnable centre', the core of unity in a man, that God speaks. It is here that he finds, in the words of St Augustine, 'the best part of the whole man', his mind. Yet it is the particular sorrow of the Christian apostle today to find that this centre is indeed impregnable, shut against violence and falsehood, enclosed in an unreal world, shut against love. Here he finds the false unity of narrowly guarded integrity (like that of Aunt Helen in *The Living Room*) and he comes to know that unity which does not lead towards *union* with God is a sterile achievement. Yet, if man, in his simplicity, can be in a position to hear, and to be unified by the gift of love, he may know, as St Augustine wrote, in the full fervour of his discovery, that God whom we seek is a 'hidden sun' who 'pours into our innermost eyes that beaming light. Thence derives the truth that we speak.'

# THE PRIESTHOOD AND PERFECTION

By

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**Translated by**

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MICHAEL RICHARDS

THE unity which Christ gave to men in his Church appears to be lost, and must again be found. That theme, repeated by Christians almost everywhere, reveals a longing which he is going to satisfy according to the extent we allow it to grow within us. Every Christian worth the name must pray, nowadays, for reconciliation with all others who are still separated from them—not, it should be remembered, in spite of their loyalty to the same Master, but, so they are convinced, because of it.

Such prayer, and whatever work we may have to do to supplement it, springs not from any human feelings of urgency in the face of the present political situation, nor even from a desire for greater effectiveness in missionary work, nor from impatience at the unreality of life in a divided Christian community. Prayer for unity is a normal part of our imitation of Christ. It is more than that; it is part of our share in his life. He prayed, and prays in us, to his Father and ours, that all may be one. That is why we pray, Catholic and Orthodox, Anglican and Free Churchman alike; and that is why the modern 'ecumenical movement' is part of the lives of us all.

Because Catholics believe and proclaim that the unity of the Church has always been a fact, and that it is to be identified with the unity which they themselves enjoy, people have presumed that this movement leaves us unconcerned, and that we remain pharisaically unmoved by the passionate desire for unity which stirs so many of those of other loyalties. 'The Roman Catholic Church', said the Archbishop of Canterbury in Canada last year, 'has yet to learn the meaning of Christian fellowship.' What an indictment, if it were true. Those who know the Catholic Church from inside can say, knowing and admitting their own personal weakness, that the privilege which Catholics believe themselves to enjoy is not taken as a permission to rest idly and safely in security. It is understood as a responsibility; Christ prayed that through unity men might be led to believe, and through those whom he calls to that unity his prayer is to be answered.

What appears to so many other Christians as hard intransigent pride is really nothing other than the response which the Catholic is compelled to make to his experience of the world he lives in. He has found the Church, and the more he learns of other Christianities, the more he is forced to point to their incompleteness when compared with the reality which he knows. His behaviour would indeed be inhuman if it were not controlled by this conviction; and those who wish to understand the Church must admit at least the possibility that the Catholic's beliefs rest on submission to fact, and not on self-deception.

After all, a unity of the sort which the Catholic claims as his own is exactly what one finds if one looks to see what the Bible has promised us. The union of our minds and hearts with Christ brings knowledge of him as God and Man united in one Person, and those who share that knowledge and union must themselves be united. Our interior knowledge of Christ must be matched by what he reveals of himself in the world around us; and if we cannot believe in the real unity of his Body, the Church, or if, believing, we cannot find such a unity, then something is lacking in our knowledge of him. To live in this world separated from his Church is to cut oneself off from Christ; and to claim full knowledge of him when one does not believe in and live in a Church which is clearly one in every way, human and divine, natural and supernatural, is to reveal an incompleteness of experience which the Catholic must, if he has any charity in his soul, constantly try to make clear.

Christian unity is not reached by agreements about the way the Church is organized and what it is to believe; we find it by following Christ and by doing his will. Christians will be united to the extent to which they are prepared to abandon themselves to him; their disunity is the sign of their disloyalty. For that reason, the movement towards unity amongst those who realize they have not at present found it must be a movement of individuals. Those who hope for some steady evolution by distinct, organized groups towards unity are mistaking the end towards which they are moving as well as the way Christ deals with his followers. Those who delay, hoping to 'bring their sheaves with them', are like the men who excused themselves from the wedding feast. Those who wish to 'work for unity' where they are may overlook the fact that God has already done all that is necessary for our unity in



him, and that our 'work' can consist only in the acceptance and use of his gift.

Christ is our reconciler; all thought about re-union must start from there. He will bring us together, if we will let him; it is our own obstinacy, not any failure of his love and power, which holds us apart. There are men who believe they can serve him best by making others groups of men their enemies. Some Catholics come perilously near to that in their attitude towards Communists; and where Christians fight among themselves over Christ himself, they have turned aside altogether from truth and charity. Protest must be made when such pamphlets appear as the censorious, ill-informed *Infallible Fallacies*, nor can it be denied that Catholic reactions to this attack were sometimes almost equally unworthy. Such stirrings of denominational feeling represent a refusal to think in terms of reconciliation; and when we hear a leading Congregationalist minister say that unity is needed in England because of the growing influence of Rome we must wonder how deep, spiritually, the ecumenical movement has really gone. Similarly, 'Weeks of Prayer for Christian Unity' can easily become—indeed have become, here and there—merely occasions for manifesting party solidarity, whether it is the World's Evangelical Alliance, with their week in January, the Anglo-Catholic societies, which keep the Octave in their own special way, or those Catholics who treat it as simply an occasion for praying for conversions. Prayer at such times which is not directed towards union with God through Jesus Christ, offered in the conviction that he will break down the barriers between Catholic and Protestant if we will let him—such prayer is turned against God, for it asks him to confirm us in our prejudices, to let us remain comfortably where we are, instead of going out in search of those from whom, humanly speaking, we are most divided.

But great numbers of men and women are today praying for unity, who have a complete readiness to do anything, to leave behind, if it becomes clear to them that they must, everything they most cherish, if by such means unity can be found. Humbled and encouraged, every Catholic aware of their example must be forced to seek ever closer dependence on his Master. In response to God, and in response to the prayers of those whom he must say have not yet the full faith, he must also seek to know them and their ways of thought and prayer. They have loved the Bible, and

they have loved our own masters of the spiritual life, too much for us not to be drawn closer to them by a study of their devotional tradition. No priest, and no layman called to this work, should be ignorant of Taylor and Law, Wesley, Baxter and Fox. Catholics should even now be undertaking an evaluation of the whole tradition of those separated from us, in the effort to establish how much of it must remain alive in the English Catholicism of the future. It will be, of course, in its fulness, the Catholicism for which the recusants suffered and the martyrs died; but may it not include also certain positive elements from the traditions of those who, though cut off from us by misunderstanding and prejudice, have yet been faithful to the central truths of Christianity, elements that emphasize parts of our own Catholic heritage which have to some extent become latent and hidden from view? In the years to come, it is increasingly going to be the responsibility of English Catholics to guard and foster every good and true element in the English Christian tradition, whether it is we ourselves or whether it is others who have had to emphasize and express them in the past. When we honour the martyrs, in the Tyburn Walk or at any other time, we must pray with them for those who saw them die and to whom it was not given to follow the same road—pray, too, for those who look on at our celebrations today, that the truth already in their minds will grow, until they can understand the martyrs and honour them with us.

If we do these things, we shall have a right, I think, to ask certain things of non-Catholics. When they raise objections to Catholic political action, we must ask that they examine a little more closely the motives that inspire it. It is sometimes necessary for Catholics to resist the state, for there are times when the state, however well-intentioned, is blind to the claims of Christ. Those Protestant and liberally-minded Christians who are pleased to hear of any attack on the Catholic Church, wherever it comes from, can hardly be said to have thought very deeply about Christ's claims on human society. We may legitimately ask those who are most friendly to us in the Anglican and Free Churches, and who want to do something for unity, to speak up more readily when ill-informed criticisms are heard.

Dislike of Rome's political activity has, of course, a long history; like Dr Micklem, John Wesley could be appreciative of our spiritual writers, while regarding us as potential traitors. We

are faced here with what amounts to a poisoning of the imagination, something which rational argument is powerless to deal with. Rome is something dark and evasive, subtle, insinuating, shunning the light of day, thriving on secrecy and concealment; it is not fanciful to suggest that it will be our novelists, poets and artists, not our theologians or philosophers, who will be best equipped to wipe away that corrosive stain. Catholicism, pushed underground for so long, now works like a repression in the unconscious of the English mind. Unfortunately, some modern Catholic writing is calculated to thicken the gloom and dirt which seems to lie so heavily upon us; nor will the state of many a parish church, either inside or out, serve to purify the Protestant imagination.

While we are realizing how large a measure of Catholic truth lies in the Caroline divines and Wesleyan hymns, it would be good to find that Protestants were equally absorbed in recusant history or the spirituality of Challoner and Ullathorne. It would be pleasant to read Philip Hughes on the positive contribution of the non-conformist tradition, and Norman Sykes or Gordon Rupp in appreciation of the Jesuits. That will come one day. Meanwhile, our hope for unity must lie not in movements or organizations but in the constant effort to express in the life of the Church the fulness of Christ which, by faith, we can discern there.



NOTE: The authors of the two following articles are members of Anglican religious communities. They give a gracious and generous recognition of work done by Catholics towards unity among Christians.—*Editor*.



## THE ABBÉ PAUL COUTURIER<sup>1</sup>

DOM BENEDICT LEY

IN the cemetery of Loyasse on the hill of Fourvière, overlooking the great city of Lyons in France, there is a special plot reserved for departed priests. Here last September I came to pray at the grave of my friend Abbé Paul Couturier. He died on March 24th, 1953, aged seventy-two. 'Il fut un Apôtre de l'Unité des Chrétiens', so runs the inscription on his gravestone. But the past tense is surely a little deceptive and out of place. For to thousands of Christians all over Europe, in these isles and in America, whether Roman Catholic or Anglican, Orthodox or Protestant, the Abbé Couturier is still a messenger sent by God to awaken them to the intolerable scandal of disunity and to proclaim the way to hasten its end—a way all can follow without denying anything of God's truth as it has been shown to them, and without any disloyalty to their respective traditions. For it was the special grace of this humble priest of Lyons to see that the cause of Christian Unity is primarily a matter of the spiritual life. He saw clearly that the first and most vital task laid on Christians by the terrible fact of their outward divisions is the fullest living of the Christian life, the greatest possible response to the grace of their incorporation in Christ by Baptism. Indeed we must all be so given over to the One Lord we profess to follow that all our reactions to persons and events are Christian—even our unconscious reactions. The more all Christians allow Christ to impress on them his own dispositions and to root them in the very fibre of their being the more effective and potent will be their prayer for Unity.

Such is the first and greatest lesson my friend taught. And this not merely by what he wrote or said but by what he was. For in his contact with others, with Christians not of his communion, he showed an unfailing charity, the charity that sees all men in the Heart of Christ and seeks Christ and only Christ in its contact with them. And so Abbé Couturier could and did rejoice in all that was of Christ and from Christ in his non-Roman Catholic

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by kind permission of editor and author from *Nashdom Abbey Record*, December, 1954.

friends. He had the greatest reverence for the work of the grace of Christ wherever he found it, and did his best to sanctify his Anglican friends by putting them into a relationship of spiritual emulation with their Catholic brethren in France. He saw, in such a holy rivalry in generosity to God, an effective way to burn up and destroy the uncharity, suspicion and mistrust which is Satan's surest way to attempt to defeat the cause of Unity and maintain our divisions.

In the Most Holy Trinity the Second Person is the Word breathing forth love. This is why my friend set himself to enkindle others, not merely to enlighten them. He knew that fire gives light as well as heat: *ex igne lux*, as he loved to say. And so he set himself to light a tremendous fire of charity in the hearts of all Christians everywhere. For the fire that encompasses the week of Prayer for Christian Unity must also diffuse light. It is meant to do so. To answer the call of this week, to let Christ pray his own prayer for Unity in us, will surely bring us all greater light. Indeed, we cannot allow his prayer free course in us without submitting all our will to it. So those who keep rightly this great week of prayer must all cease to wish for unity as the triumph of their own ideas about it and begin to will it as he wills it and to will the means that he wills for its fulfilment. Thus it is that every year there is an ever-growing number of Christians who pray in an invincible hope that he who is the one bread that we break as a sign of unity will give us this unity when he wills and by the means that he wills.

To be present when the Abbé broke this bread, to assist at his Mass, was to learn whence he drew the strength to drive his frail body to the end in his indefatigable labours to promote the observance of the week of prayer. To see the man as he really was, one had to be with him at his deepest moments and witness the consecration with which he pleaded Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice. One learnt then whence came that charity which enabled him to respect the consciences and convictions of others, without any sort of disloyalty to any claim or dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, I am convinced that it was precisely because his faith in all the Roman Church teaches was so deep and strong that he saw so clearly that the more his separated brethren deepened their hold on and lived by the truths they believed in common with the Roman Church the more eager they would be for

union with her. This is why he always came back to the primacy of the spiritual life in all his work and thoughts about the unity of Christians. And this is why his great heart was so deeply wounded by any sort of proselytism or any attempt to force the consciences or alter roughly the convictions of others. The idea of scoring over an opponent in controversy or of winning a victory for one's own Church because it was one's own was utterly repugnant to him. He did not like to say 'We have the truth: you have not, and so we are superior to you.' Such a sectarian spirit defeats its own end. Rather he preferred to say the truth possesses us. For when souls are possessed by the truth then it can radiate from them, enlighten and enkindle others.

When I think of my friend and remember his invincible confidence in the ultimate triumph of the cause of Unity I am scared at my own lack of hope and faith. He never despaired when confronted with obstacles, neither was he deterred by the magnitude of the task before him. I am sure that the secret of his hope is to be found in the fullness of his personal oblation to Christ. He would love to tell one of lives sacrificed or offered to God for Unity. He was himself such a victim for it. And so he could put up with and endure all the sufferings his work brought him and the immense labour it entailed. He could not yield to despair and think the ultimate goal impossible to attain or only capable of achievement by the very slow process of individual conversions. For, even when good and laudable, such conversions do not solve the problem of Unity, but often exacerbate it. Moreover, if such a process were successful, it would dissipate all the cultural riches of God's work in the different Christian traditions and the contribution these have each to make when Unity is attained.

The Abbé's hope remained invincible because by his complete acceptance of his own share in Christ's Passion for Unity he had entered already into its triumph. So he knew that the cause for which he suffered and died would be victorious in the end. And his pains and weariness of mind and body in his last months only served to increase his hope and make it more invulnerable.

As I stood by his grave last September and prayed for him and to him it seemed to me, as it seems to his friends in Lyons, that he was there with me; more alive, more active than ever before, bringing me the assurance that Christ will give us Unity by the means that he wills and when he wills. 'Il fut un Apôtre de l'Unité



des Chrétiens', and he still is, calling all Christians to realize the scandal and horror of their divisions and to take here and now the immediate remedy for it—total surrender to Christ, the Master of the impossible, and complete response to his prayer, his supreme desire, *Ut omnes unum sint!*



## ESSAYS IN CHRISTIAN UNITY<sup>1</sup>

GEOFFREY CURTIS, C.R.

THOSE who have laboured and prayed specially for Christian Unity will read, reread, ponder and treasure this book with great gratitude. We pray that it will be very widely read and studied. Such writing has been awaited by Anglicans for at least a century: we could hardly expect it before when the nation which we represented was still persecuting the Church of Rome in our land. Perhaps it is in the fulness of time that it has come: for the work seems to be in striking concord with the teaching and spirit of Pope Pius XII, the inspired leader whom Providence has given to edify and guide the Church of our day. One of its excellences would seem to be that it indicates practical applications of the latter's counsels in the special conditions of our land.

The essays collected in this volume are of various dates from 1928 to 1954. They are unquestionably occasional utterances. Yet paradoxically enough this volume may well come to be regarded as the classic expression of the oecumenical attitude of Rome. It would deserve this place because of the deep level at which the problems of oecumenism are tackled and the doctrine involved in these expounded; but also by reason of the marked qualification of the writer to fulfil this task. Here is at last an English Roman Catholic leader, and remarkably enough a 'convert' from Anglicanism, who though he has found certainty and peace elsewhere, can see the Church of England clearly and see it whole. (The

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Christian Unity*. By Henry St John, O.P. (Blackfriars; 12s. 6d.)

apparent impossibility for Roman Catholics of doing this—and admittedly it is difficult even for Anglicans—has been made clear by the current correspondence on the subject of Anglicanism and unity in *The Tablet*.)

Father St John's interest in the subject dates from 1910 when, still an Anglican brought-up in old-fashioned Tractarian ways, he discovered that the deep personal love of Jesus Christ can be found in communions other than that which was then his own. His reception into the Church of Rome took place during the first world war. But he has wide experience of the Anglican Church attained by persevering and discriminating study as well as by personal contact. And he has all the other qualities needed to help us to see ourselves more clearly and to see our brethren aright—charity, candour, patience, practical wisdom, indomitable hope, the capacity of generous appreciation, of compassion and of stern challenging criticism. The Archbishop of Canterbury will benefit as much as Cardinal Griffin by reading this book. We hope it will have its place in every theological college and seminary as well as in every bishop's study in the English-speaking Christian world.

Father St John became a member of the Roman Catholic Church largely as the result of the impression made upon him by Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. He provides a most able and persuasive defence of Newman's theory, though I am far from certain that it is proof against such criticism of Newman as is brought by Doctor Darwell Stone in his book *The Christian Church*. The influence of Newman is very clear in many of these essays, not only in that concerning Infallibility. Father St John seems to have a kindred vision of the massing of the forces of evil over against us and of the consequent need of the Church as the ark and fortress of salvation. With regard to the disciple as well as the master one finds oneself asking whether his faith in the Easter victory of the ascended Lord apprehends vividly enough that the Son of God has already overcome the world and all that it does or can ever contain. But Father St John is more likely on these subjects to move Anglican theological opinion than was his great master. Newman impresses and fascinates the Anglican mind always, but for all his sanctity, eloquence, and brilliance he far less often persuades. Father St John will win attention because he has learnt far more from his greater master, Saint Thomas Aquinas, whose influence on the Church of England has

been always strong and greatest in what was theologically its greatest period. There is the stamp of the sobriety and integrity and good sense of the great master on all his writings, though he keeps wonderfully free from the special technical language of scholasticism.

The early chapters of the book provide a valuable and stimulating *mise en scène* for the discussion of the great questions with regard to Christian unity. Most precious to an Anglican is the clear sounding here of the note of penitence so splendidly struck by Cardinal Pole whose address at the opening of the Council of Trent is here effectively quoted. Here is a worthy reply by an English Catholic to the confession of our own corporate guilt made by the Anglican bishops in the famous Lambeth Appeal. We have been stirred by the striking of this note in the writings of the late Abbé Couturier and Père Congar, of both of whom Father St John often reminds us. We have not found it before in any writing which proceeds from Roman Catholic England. This penitence goes along with a full acknowledgment that the 'objective grace' of God (though not his sacramental grace) is in operation in the spiritual life of Anglicans, conveyed, it may be, through their sacramental ordinances. We are shown unanswerably and once for all that the alleged exclusiveness of Rome is precisely similar in character to ours, in our attitude towards non-conformists. We would wish, however, in this connection that the author showed himself a little more sensitive here and elsewhere as to the extent to which the Church of England at the time of her separation through her hierarchical, sacramental and liturgical ordinances, unlike the protestant bodies, deliberately disclaimed any intention to depart from the unity of the Church.

In the third chapter we find a measured but generous appreciation of the Malines Conversations. It was these that showed the road which Father St John has pursued by means of small conferences between Dominican and other theologians and a group of their Anglo-Catholic counterparts. It is a road along which *tali ductore* striking progress may be made on the road to unity: the walls of misunderstanding and prejudice are quietly but drastically uprooted. The next two chapters give evidence on almost every page of the writer's thorough knowledge of the Anglican Church. His insight has penetrated behind the shell or façade of confusion and compromise and he discerns what lies beneath, a



life in Christ which however ruffled by internal tensions is steadfast, solid, orthodox and liturgical in its roots and fairly well diffused over the whole world. He knows what might be called the anatomy or pathology of the Anglican Church and discriminates clearly between what is truly Anglican and what is exotic in its Anglo-Catholic part.

Father St John pays just and kindly tribute to the services which Anglican scholars and theologians have given to Christendom in the field of Biblical study and that of apologetics. This acts, though not so intended, as an emollient or embrocation for the Anglican reader who is to find his Church in the final chapters most trenchantly arraigned for its readiness to find its final justification in the 'Appeal to Sound Learning'. Of all Father St John's criticisms of the Church of England this perhaps is the most potent and the most timely. In so far as a convinced Anglican can do so, I think that all Father St John's criticism of our Church must be accepted. Of course as an Anglican I claim that there are some to be made on the other side. But so kindly and fair is Father St John's attitude towards us that an Anglo-Catholic can learn not a little from these pages as to how better to esteem his fellow-Anglicans. For instance, in an excellent chapter on Doctrine in the Church of England the writer gives an interesting discussion of the (1938) Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine in the Church of England. This report is the bugbear of many Anglo-Catholics because of the measure of erroneous belief which it speaks of as tolerated, *not nota bene* permitted, in the Church of England at that date: The document is for that reason patient of grave misuse, as for instance by a Jesuit theologian who in the pages of *Unitas* cited those portions of the Report, as supposedly an official description of Anglicanism, in order to provide a warning to eastern orthodox readers who might feel drawn to think favourably of the Anglican Church. Father St John prefers to speak of the positive contribution of the Report: 'For the first time in history it can be said that the Church of England as a whole, in so far as the commission is representative of it, puts forward a doctrine of the Church, the ministry and the sacraments which is fundamentally catholic in type.'

It is perfectly true that in the Anglican conception of ecclesiastical authority the appeal to sound learning has been made to function in a fashion which it is unfitted to do. Our present crisis

(it is in the strict sense this) with regard to our relations to the Church of South India has brought this home to us. We have discovered that we cannot *upon historical grounds alone* insist upon the episcopal succession as the *esse* of the Church. 'The evidence for Episcopacy has as much or as little support in Scripture and tradition prior to the fourth century as has the Papacy. Looked at from a strictly objective standpoint, both the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession and the doctrinal claims of the Apostolic See are in the same category: they can only be justified and insisted upon in accordance with presuppositions concerning the nature of the Church and her ministry.' So writes Canon Rich in his valuable book *Spiritual Authority in the Church of England*, an Anglican work which Father St John recommends highly. Sound learning has its indispensable place in the development of doctrine, but its right theological use presupposes the dogmatic authority and magisterium of the episcopate and the tradition of the Church. How can this authority express itself effectively unless the Church is organically and visibly one? and how can the Church be guarded in its visible hierarchical unity without a primacy of responsibility endowed with an unique authority equivalent to the weight of that burden?

Father St John has been alert to notice changes for the good in the Church of England during the period of his acquaintanceship with it. May I add one item of observation with regard to the Anglican landscape which he has examined so shrewdly? The greatest single theological influence, with the possible exception of Bishop Gore whom he so usefully corrects on an important point, has been a theologian to whom Bishop Gore himself avowed himself deeply indebted—the Roman Catholic Baron Friedrich von Hügel. This explains to some extent our growing susceptibility to Catholic influence. And would it be an impertinence to note that as an Anglican sees it reflected in this book, there have been recently wonderful growth and amelioration in the immense Catholic world of Rome?

'Rome must be other first', said the Anglican seventeenth-century Archbishop Laud, declining any immediate possibility of reconciliation with Rome. Certainly Laud if he returned from the grave would recognize great differences in the greater Church of the West as it confronts us now. It is true that there seem at first sight to be three great new bolts which have been shot in the door

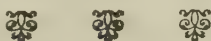
that shuts us Anglicans out, the three recent dogmatic definitions. But on close examination the Archbishop would find that all are susceptible of being interpreted in a way which leaves them no longer discordant to the gospel. The manner of interpretation is all-important. In what spirit are they to be expounded? Looking around him he would find that the answer would be vitally affected by the upspringing of certain great theological currents submerged in the Roman Church of his day, but now all important in the life of the Church. Biblical study he finds to his amazement is now everywhere one of the great interests of the Church. Patristics claim on all hands the same eager attention. A liturgical movement which secures for the laity a real understanding of and a real part in the Church's worship is beginning to penetrate the whole Church. There is frequent communion everywhere. The theology of the Eucharistic sacrifice has so developed as to leave little trace of the once prevalent insistence as to the fresh slaughter of Christ in each single Mass which so repelled the Anglican reformers. Indeed the Archbishop would find that one widely influential interpretation of the Mass, that of Père de la Taille, is identical in principle with that which an Anglican, Sir Will Spens, developed in the Church of England some years before the appearance of the former's great work. Finally the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the theologian most influential for the moral theologians of his period in the Anglican Church, are now held to constitute the official philosophy of the Church of Rome. Certainly, our Archbishop would say, the road lies open towards mutual understanding.

It is such lights as these that have refreshed and enriched and enlarged the Catholic spirit which breathes through these pages: and of the Anglican Church it must be said that in the formative time of its greatest darkness it lived by these lights. But there is one light brighter still that signally ennobles these pages; and this the Archbishop would reverence most deeply of all, for he found it very hard to enkindle and cherish it in his own communion. That is the light of obedience. It has always been difficult to keep it burning in our Church, and in the light of providence and in that of these pages we begin to see reasons why this is so.

As to the ultimate union doctrinal and sacramental which we so ardently desire, there remain still mountains of difficulty in the way. No one has less need than Fr St John to be reminded that as



an Anglican theologian has said, complacent optimism, no less than pessimism, is treason against hope. But hope, rooted in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith that moves mountains, is a Christian duty. And Fr St John has given us in this book the most valuable incentive to hope.



## CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

**A**S the liturgical cycle of the Church renews itself, Good Friday and Easter pass in much the same way as they have since the time of Calvary and the finding of the stone rolled back. Seed-time is so perennial that it unites centuries, making little difference between 1620 and 1720, or dates such as 1870 or 1955. The methods of sowing alter as little as those of harvesting: two thousand years bring small change to the shape of cross or sickle. The apparent relationship between religious and agricultural rites might therefore suggest that the Church is as immutable in her outward life as she is in her doctrines. This is not so. *The Church is the people*; her bishops are their leaders, and in a healthy society the two must work and pray in union. Yet between the people and the bishops stand the priests; beneath the soutane and habit (which have remained the same through the ages) there are men who differ from each other, who grow and develop all the time. A modern sermon preached on the Passion in Westminster Cathedral will be less flowery than it was thirty years ago; histrionics do not win converts today. Nor will a sermon preached today be effective if it is delivered in the style of Newman, Faber or Manning. This is something that English Catholics have had to learn by the hard way of experience; this is why—perhaps more than elsewhere—the Lay Apostolate is left with a particularly vital role to play in the conversion of England.

Good Friday this year in London was as I had met it before in Shrewsbury during the war as a soldier, and in Yorkshire as a schoolboy. The morning came into its stride to the accompaniment of somebody practising the scales; the notes tinkled over the small Hampstead back gardens, but became lost and separated

from each other; they struggled for a uniformity, a belief, and it was with a certain irony that I realized that their intended tune was *I believe*—a current song hit. Eventually, however, their notes became drowned amid the more sonorous, full-throated singing of the Bach *St Matthew Passion*. Several wirelasses were tuned in to the same programme, linking the street.

In the *cul de sac* in which I live a man was polishing his car; her wing-plates gleamed in the sun; she would fly the corners all the faster when in the afternoon he took the road for the coast. From the heath there floated down the hill and between the rows of houses the sounds of the roundabouts being assembled; the fair would begin at three o'clock. Some children came to the door. The ward-maid (who has the rooms above) let them in. I heard them ask if she would take them to the fair. 'Not today', she answered, 'Not Jesus's day—any other holiday. 'Oliday Monday but not today.' She was quite vehement. I remembered that in her room was a pre-Raphaelite print of the Good Shepherd. I have heard her speaking to other tenants, 'We get good voices when we go up there', and as she speaks so her own voice rises and you sense an inflexion of the wrists heavenwards. She is forty-three; devout Church of England; and on Good Friday she did not sing. Before the clock tower had struck five she had been up, scrubbing the floor.

Yet now that all this is past, it is the voices of those children that beat with my typewriter; imprisoned like birds in the keys, they twitter their questioning Lenten litany. 'But why can't we go?' *Because Jesus died*. 'But why did he die? Why won't he let us go?' *Because Jesus died to save you*. 'But he died a long time ago, when he was King of London, and now we have a Queen . . .' The story of explanation begins. Over a hundred years ago it was the same story. In *The Conditions of the Working Classes in 1844* Frederick Engels noted how some children thought that Christ was Adam and others that Christ was 'a king in London long ago'. This social study was published a year later—the year of Newman's conversion. Has there then been no advance? Has universal suffrage and elementary education proved a farce? In a century's turning what has been the gain and loss? These are not begged questions; they are perennial—as relevant in 1955 as they were in 1945 or 1845.

London is probably the most sophisticated capital in Europe; it

is the centre of all important English publishing, and because the press that is read abroad is so widely written by men living in London who see their capital as the largest in the world, there is a great danger in believing that all England, let alone London, is as progressive, atheist and pagan as the English press would sometimes suggest. Half an hour's bus ride from Fleet Street to White-chapel or Hampstead will soon dispel the notion. For the small number of progressives and atheists is quite out of proportion with the enormous amount that they write. The Public Libraries, for instance, are hesitant to stock work by avowed atheists and the B.B.C. allows few talks to go through on their networks that are openly anti-Christian. Toleration for them means at the most a debate such as that held several years ago on 'the existence of God' between Bertrand Russell and Fr F. C. Coplestone, the Jesuit. Accordingly when one speaks of freedom of religious opinion in England one must always be sure of one's terms: there is, for example, no freedom granted publicly to worship the Devil. Black Masses, as in medieval jurisdiction, are still against the law. Again, atheists do not easily come by headmasterships. For around London the population is homogeneously Christian. This does not mean that people necessarily go to church—except for weddings and funerals—but it does mean that nearly all their children are sent regularly to some form of Sunday school. There they sing the rousing hymns of Izaak Watts and Charles Wesley, and as long as this tradition continues poets will remain the legislators of England; for the best hymns are stirring poems, and none but a bigot can deny that these hymns are anything other—especially when young voices a thousand strong proclaim them. I put the mental date of these children and their parents at about that of 1870—the date when compulsory education was first introduced.

Away from London in the smaller towns such as Shrewsbury or Coventry or along the Pennines the mental age is nearer 1720, the year when the witch-cult finally died. As they walk along streets shadowed by massive red-brick smoking towers, factory girls going to their looms and typists to their jobs may read the news printed in London the night before, but on passing a clergyman they will still often touch iron for luck—as their ancestors did when meeting a Druid. Atom or hydrogen bomb, headless horseman and mermaids continue to remain a part of their living liturgy. In Lancashire, the last stronghold of the Faith after Elizabethan



times, it is considered unlucky for a girl to wear green; if she defies the convention, she may be shouted at.

Yet farther away in the more rural districts the mental climate is nearer 1620. I remember meeting a colonel and his wife who were running a small guest-house. One night they were awoken by a neighbour asking for beetroot. The colonel replied by saying that he had none left in his garden, but that he had some tinned—would that do? The other answered, 'We have just heard by telephone that our daughter's labour pains have come on. We know that if we eat this, she will be all right.' Notice the 1952 incongruities—the telephone and the tinned vegetable allied with the superstitious belief in the properties of beetroot for a safe delivery. England is full of such incongruities and it is only by making a survey of the country as a whole that one realizes quite how few the moderns are, quite how remote progressive thought is from everyday reality. The conclusion of both Spengler and Jung (so different in their approach!) aptly returns: *the number of people in touch with contemporary civilization is always minute.*

Universal suffrage and elementary education, one would suppose, might have brought up a generation of children who would know the difference between Christ and Adam and their present Queen. Yet it would be a mistake to see this lack of common knowledge as due to any lack of attendance at the Sunday schools; rather it forms part of a more general problem—resistance to Christianity because of the manner in which it is presented. The trouble at one remove is that, although you can see that children answer a roll call, this does not ensure that they will listen. Nor does it mean that the children are not bright nor eager for knowledge, because they will be able to tell you quickly enough about Dick Turpin, Don Quixote or a movie star. (The commissioners who followed Engels in his survey testified that children knew more about Dick Turpin than Adam.) The real trouble today—at two removes as it were—is that with the pre-Raphaelite movement there came a sentimentalization into English portraiture; the figure of Christ appeared no longer manly, but effeminate; and this pre-Raphaelitism has affected the whole of religious teaching, especially that of the Church of England (Millais, Holman Hunt and Burne-Jones were all Protestants). Remember too that it is against this pre-Raphaelite background that modern Catholicism has come into being.

In 1829 the Penal Laws were repealed. Yet the restrictive life under these laws bequeathed to Catholics a siege mentality. At the Council of Trent the bishops had decided that rigid definition and the concentration of the Church's forces were the only course to be adopted if vital principles were to be effectively defended. The Church became deliberately militant. Organized zeal and skilful debate were at a premium and the intellectual element was inevitably sacrificed for the more controversial and devotional. Intense and unified *esprit de corps*, preparation for possible martyrdom and above all absolute military obedience were imperatives if attack and persecution were to be resisted. For siege intensifies defence; the walls must be manned that the city shall be preserved—and the arts of peace suffer a corresponding eclipse. Those who endure remember past glories and a past culture, so that when hostilities end there is much leeway to be made up. In England Catholics had lost touch with Catholics abroad, and active as the Church had been there—remember the impact of Ignatius Loyola, Charles Borromeo and Philip Neri—she had at home no fresh native spiritual literature to fall back upon; and a great many of the foreign spiritual manuals circulating were tainted with Jansenism. For want of a better art, she was forced to absorb pre-Raphaelite painting.

'We are living on the intellect of a former age', Newman had written in the mid-century. For it was Newman who was later to speak of England's second Catholic spring, so that as one looks back over a century one sees that Catholic gains have often been Protestant losses. One is forced to look directly at the present.

Exact figures are always hard to provide, but a conservative estimate is that there are now three million Catholics in England. This includes neither the floating population of foreign emigrés nor commercial travellers. Roughly, too, there are 11,000 converts a year. In fact the figures for converts over the last two decades make a rising graph.

Up to about 1930 the aim of English Catholics was to consolidate. They were still to some extent living on the intellect and art of a former age—a state which lessened as Belloc and Chesterton became more prolific. The idea of the Church being 'the scarlet woman of Rome' and of every Jesuit being a spy were giving place to a new kind of rationalism—logical argument. If in country districts the more irrational attitudes still prevailed, there

were some new London publishers who were bringing out reasoned and clear attacks on Catholicism. In place of abuse and blind prejudice, it was being argued that Catholics were not Liberal, that if Catholics gained control in England there would follow a regime as illiberal as that in Mussolini's Italy. Unfortunately this belief was fostered because many Catholics identified the tyrannical corporate state that Mussolini was building with the teachings of *Rerum Novarum* on Corporatism. The back numbers of *The Tablet* during the 'thirties' tell this sad tale. Which brings me to the Catholic press.

The English Catholic press is almost exclusively Conservative (there is no Catholic daily). There is nothing wrong with this because a Catholic may vote either Conservative, Labour or Liberal. A Catholic editor will naturally have his own political views. The views of the editors of *The Tablet*, *Catholic Times* and *The Universe* are all right-wing: *The Catholic Herald* is a Liberal exception; and the temptation from a survey of the Catholic weekly press might be to suppose that all English Catholic opinion is one hundred per cent Conservative. In actual fact it is nearer forty per cent. At the Election in 1955 more Catholics voted Labour than Conservative. Again, most English Catholic writers tend to be either Conservative or Liberal: this may also tempt some to believe that all Catholic thought is Conservative—a line which opponents are quick to exploit. Yet a visit to any provincial university such as Leeds, Southampton or Reading will soon dispel this illusion. For what has happened is that professors and dons (nearly all of whom are converts) have brought to their exposition of the old theology new methods, and because as converts few of them have written more than one book, their work is mainly known only to readers of specialized reviews. Yet they have a waiting public, as time will prove. . . .

In the last century Wilfrid Ward records that during his seminary days 'those students were best thought of who learnt best by heart. Genuine philosophic thought annoyed our Professors.' Yet when one admits that this is no longer the case one has a suspicion that this is at least partly because laymen such as novelists and poets have brought matters to a head. Until recently theologians refrained from making sufficiently public their views on the new problems, especially in science and medicine—their siege mentality encouraging excessive caution in these realms. It would seem



that much of recent apologetic—particularly on sex and psychology—has received prominence because these sexual and psychological problems have already been aired in the poems and novels of writers who are converts.

Monsignor Ronald Knox, at a centenary meeting held to celebrate Newman's entry into the Church, said that he believed that there were three main obstacles to conversion. Englishmen did not like the idea of owing spiritual sovereignty to a foreign pope, but even more important they disliked the Church's teaching on sex—in particular with regard to contraception and divorce; and indeed through the 'thirties' and early 'forties' not much had been done to put before the public in clear language what the exact sexual ethic of the Church was. The two or three Catholic publishers that existed seemed wary of bringing out straightforward manuals, and the language was so veiled in the few books which they did issue that often the meaning was obscured. Children were expected 'to learn the catechism by heart', while with regard to the sixth commandment the phrase 'irregular motions of the flesh' continued and continues to appear in edition after edition to mystify more and more growing boys and girls. However, the novels of Graham Greene—notably *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951)—and Evelyn Waugh's books—notably *Brideshead Revisited* (1945)—have brought a spotlight to some of these matters. The problems these authors state (even if a little crudely) can no longer be ignored. The atmosphere was much more broadminded by 1950 than it had been in 1930. There had been an opening of barriers. Consider for instance Cardinal Wiseman's *Fabiola* and put it beside Archbishop David Mathew's novel, *The Prince of Wales' Feathers* (1953). The historical 'catacomb' novel contrasts oddly with the study of a modern dock-town's human driftwood—its coloured peoples, half-castes, spiv-adventurers and bawds. For here is the flotsam and jetsam background that Englishmen have seen in their own dock towns. Here is something much more easily comprehended than a pre-Raphaelite picture of the Good Shepherd because this is the world of present reality. Here is something known and experienced at first hand. Primitive feelings are examined and produce a response in the reader. This is no piece of hagiographical fustian.

The recent success of Mr Billy Graham, the American evangelist, was due principally to the fact that he spoke a language that all

could understand. In his way he stood for a 'positive theology'. Moreover, because he held his meetings in an arena that was normally associated with sport, he was able to draw thousands of Londoners who had never heard the Bible read nor commented upon since they had left their Sunday schools. Indeed, what was conspicuous about his audiences were the bright colours that they wore: this was goodbye to nonconformity and a re-awakening of Elizabethan England. Moreover, the preponderance of his audiences were under thirty-five and over sixty per cent were men. Yet his success was met coldly, if a little enviously, in most of the Catholic press.

One of Mr Graham's points was that he foresaw in Europe a great religious revival, with London acting as a kind of pivot centre. Simultaneously it seems English Catholics have had the same idea. For there was launched a drive 'to bring the Truth about Christ and his Church to millions in Britain'. This campaign, still running successfully, features a trend that was discerned by many chaplains during the war who came back to civilian life with the belief that there was a vast public waiting for news of 'Christ and his Church' if only such news could be presented intelligently and in contemporary language. Remember that both rationalism of 'the scarlet woman of Rome' kind and of the type that finds a spy in every Jesuit is now a thing of the past. For what is wanted to counter the modern rationalism is a clear logical presentation of facts, with a religious accent showing what the Church *is* and *means*; the emphasis nowadays falls on *being* rather than *proving*, because what arouses people from apathy is not the trotting out of proofs, but the evidence that facts add up to truths which are both realities and matters that affect them. Here are examples from some of the advertisements which have appeared:

You take your solemn oath on the Bible. Are you sincere? What do you really think about the Bible? Is it the Word of God? Or is it out-of-date, unscientific, a lot of fairy tales? Catholics hold that the Bible is the Word of God and, when properly understood, conflicts neither with the truths of history nor of science. The Catholic Church staunchly upholds the Bible. Does that surprise you? Perhaps other things about the Catholic Church would surprise you too. Why not find out?

I'm not odd. I catch the 8.30—or just miss it—the same as you do every morning. But not on Saturday. Then I have a lie in. On Saturday afternoon I go to a football match. Saturday evening I take the wife to the pictures. On Sunday I go with the family to Mass.

Yet chaps say I'm odd! Why? They say it about me and thousands like me. I'll tell you why. Because I am a Catholic. They think I believe all kinds of nonsense—like paying to have my sins forgiven, praying to images, saying that the Pope can't get a sum wrong. But I'm not odd. I can tell you what I really believe.

This is perhaps part of a conscious movement towards the vernacular. The criticism that such a presentation is vulgar and cheap has already been made and must be met. That the press is all-powerful is a commonplace; that it does more harm than good is another general catch-phrase. Yet the latter hides a distinctly defeatist attitude, the kind of attitude that accepts the ruling that this is also 'a post-Christian age'.

The newspaper is potentially one of the strongest means of communication between men. It has mass circulations denied to other publications, and it carries, set out on the same page, news from all over the globe. A provincial paper like the *Sheffield Star* or *Liverpool Echo*, as well as providing an index to local activities at the same time (in a way denied a national paper), can link local celebrities whom everybody knows with events taking place in Egypt. A photograph of John Bull in khaki replaces the familiar pin-striped suit that he wore when a cashier at the bank. Quite suddenly on the printed page Liverpool Docks have a bearing on the Suez Canal; men are seen less as islands, and more as part of a huge linking mainland. For newspapers emphasize that when a Polar bear coughs at the North Pole he may trouble the sands of the Sahara, just as a series of lies told in Sheffield one night may have their repercussion in Los Angeles a year later. Unconsciously perhaps newspapers are providing what might be described as an indirect form of Christian Humanism, a leavening. For paradoxically in building up national barriers (remember Hearst's boast that he could start a war) they have become less national, as with the development of radio-photography they have taken to profusely illustrating their texts. The language of the eye is uni-



versal—so universal that the visual liturgy which it provides might be called the extension of a 'positive theology'. 'We are all brothers in Christ.' John Bull's photograph can give the well-worn text a fresh meaning. For these advertisements capped with illustrated prints of John Bull as a cashier, a soldier, a family man emphasize that Catholicism is no exclusive Italian mission, but a religion that is catholic in the widest sense.

The need for English Catholicism today then is to be full-blooded. The influence of the pre-Raphaelites has long been a-dying. Too much stress on Mariology has led to a lack of virility in the Englishman's conception of Christ's mother. Admittedly England was once called Mary's dowry, but it was at a time when Mariology was something basic, something connected with the soil, fertility and the cycle of life. Yet, like Christ's image, our Lady also has become a spirit without a body. In these canvases and statues lives neither the man who could drive money lenders from the Temple nor the woman who could endure the hardships of a winter stable. Too many folds in our Lady's gown have left her with a body that is hard to recognize as a woman's—and one has only to think of medieval stained glass to realize how far this disembodying has gone. So what is needed for a second spring, as it were, is another re-incarnation. The Scriptures are full of descriptions of men as strong as oxen, and perhaps it was no mere chance that put an ass and an ox in Christ's stable at Bethlehem. On Palm Sunday he rode through the streets on an ass and a week later he showed the strength of an ox in his Passion. Yet use such parables and they will be found shocking in many Catholic circles. The pre-Raphaelite influence has been so strong in conservative religious interpretation that the beef and lustiness which exists in the New Testament has been almost forgotten. Which sounds laughable of a country whose national figure is called John Bull.

For instance, one will hear Catholics speaking of the mockery of fairs opening on great feast days. Remember the ward-maid who lives above me was not willing to take the children who asked her, but nor did she condemn them for the suggestion. I recall this particularly because before the war I heard a sermon strong in the denunciation of the law that allowed such fairs to open. In fact this puritan-nonconformist attitude of contempt—mild or hot or tinged with Jansenism—arises from a total mis-

understanding of a Church whose holy days have always been holidays and whose feasts have always been associated with fairs—as indeed in Europe they still are. Even a Good Friday fair ironically might still bear witness to Easter. I should like therefore to suggest here along what grounds it seems to me that a ‘positive English theology’ can develop.

A child when he is small will whirl round and round for the sheer joy of it. Again adults, like children, love roundabouts. The simple desire to spin round and round until you fall is a desire that is with men until they die; in fact they live in a whirling world in which everything is circular—the rotation of the crops, their position in the womb, their whole day. This is something literal and basic—an experience common to all men. It is as common now as it was in 1870, 1720, 1620 or Christ’s own day. It was something that both Christ and his mother experienced, since his birth was a natural though miraculous birth with no hint of unnatural deity as, for example, in the case of Jove when he sprang full-grown from Minerva. That is why at the beginning of this survey I spoke of the vital role that the lay apostolate has to play in the conversion of a slowly dying nonconformist England. There is a big temptation to think that because Christ was born into a Mediterranean culture, then Christian and Western values can be equated. This is a line exploited by politicians, and now that Catholic emancipation is so well established there is the added danger that Catholic votes may be canvassed for causes that are no more than good old die-hard nineteenth-century materialism wrapped up under fresh labels. Even in literature where religion (in the face of Communism’s eclipse in the West) is becoming fashionable, there is a big temptation to herald a Christian literary revival simply because writers employ so many words like ‘incense’ and ‘rosaries’. That is why in the English lay apostolate, the Young Christian Workers act as an anchor to sense—manual and literal. They remind one that the figure is three million Catholics and the number of converts is something like 11,000 a year. They remind one that every day a large body of the Catholic franchise is facing the developments of a new technology within whose science there resides a truth to be found and a theology to be worked out. They remind one that there can be no retreat to the last century. Basic words must be found to incorporate these new techniques and yet still bear wit-

ness to the meaning of the Word. For this is the dual task facing Catholics as they enter into the second half of the twentieth century, and at such a time for English Catholics there can be nothing better than to remember Newman's prophetic words: 'We act according to our name: Catholics are at home in every time and place, in every state of society, in every class of the community, in every stage of cultivation.'



## A LITTLE-KNOWN BENEDICTINE MYSTIC

**Domna Maria Caecilia Baij**

S.M.J., O.S.B.

**M**ONTEFIASCONA is a charming and very ancient city of Latium; so ancient that its origins are shrouded in the mist that envelops the strange race of the Etruscans. It crowns the mass dominating one end of the Lago di Bolsena, and its hillsides are famous for their excellent wine. Erected into an episcopal see in 1369, it has numbered in its long line of titulars several conspicuous personalities; amongst others Alessandro Farnese, later Pope Paul III, and, during Maria Caecilia's own lifetime, Cardinal Pompeo Aldobrandini.

Elected abbess of the Benedictine monastery of San Pietro, Montefiascone, for the first time in 1743, Domna Maria Caecilia Baij was re-elected six years later, and subsequently retained the office until her death in January 1766, at the age of seventy-one. During the course of her religious life, she had exercised a number of responsible offices in the monastery—portress, infirmarian, sacristan and mistress of novices. Throughout her entire existence she was dogged by persistent ill-health, to which was added the heavy trial of bitter opposition on the part of her community, the

irritating and petty jealousies of confessors, the incomprehension and criticism of certain members of the local clergy, who even managed temporarily to prejudice against her the bishop succeeding Cardinal Aldobrandini on the episcopal throne.

Domna Maria's work bears a twofold aspect. As regards herself, she had constantly before her eyes the horror of the world's sins, and accordingly she devoted herself to whole-hearted reparation. Her practices were intensified at times like Carnival, or when our Lord confided special intentions to her, such as reparation for the offences committed by consecrated souls, her own community in particular, or when he entrusted her with the care of the diocese of Montefiascone and exhorted her to labour by prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of the souls of her own city. As regards others, the holy abbess earnestly strove to exert her influence over the ungrateful task of reforming the abuses openly tolerated in her own monastery, and rampant among the clergy outside. To the latter end she laboured to establish a 'Casa Apostolica'. The aim of this work was 'the reform of the secular clergy . . . and the training of fervent and zealous young priests . . . with the hope that the example might be followed by other cities, and that other such houses might be instituted for the reform and sanctification of the clergy and the faithful'.<sup>1</sup> The project met with violent opposition, not least from those who felt themselves concerned. Cardinal Aldobrandini himself was, at first, averse to it; but later, he changed his views and did all he could to encourage its foundation. Maria Caecilia did not live to see the full achievement of her enterprise, but she did have the satisfaction of seeing its humble start.

The work of reforming the monastery was even more arduous. The religious were divided in opinion, and those opposed to Domna Maria openly rebelled and affronted her. Not the least of her victories was that won by her sweetness and persevering patience over her turbulent and strong-headed subjects. By the time of her death, the monastery had become a model of regular monastic observance, and the impetus of fervour and zeal she set in motion lasted for many years after her decease. Domna Maria died as had always been her wish and ardent prayer, unobtrusively and humbled even to the end. The act attesting her death which was drawn up by the confessor is frigid in its brevity.

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv. Monast.* A 29.



Among the many spiritual gifts which were so liberally showered upon Domna Maria, there is one exceptional grace. She describes it thus in a letter of 6th May, 1742, to her confessor. 'Yesterday evening, during meditation, which was on the Holy Ghost, since this is his novena, I was powerfully urged . . . to enter with him into a cordial friendship, and to take him as my true friend. . . . My Spouse confirmed the truth of this friendship, for the Holy Spirit lives in us and, when in a state of grace, our soul is his temple . . . This morning, after receiving Holy Communion, I saw, high above my head, a white dove emitting three rays of light . . . After a time I seemed to be in a place filled with majesty, and where our God showed himself as a great light irradiating all things, while I heard the Sanctus being thrice repeated. I found myself surrounded by our holy Father St Benedict, St John the Evangelist, St Scholastica and St Gertrude. . . . A voice was heard from the throne saying: "Bid her renew her vows." Having renewed my vows . . . I heard the voice issuing from the throne, that is from the great light that showed itself with such majesty . . . say: "As my daughter I enrich you with a new grace, and I give you my blessing." Then I beheld my Spouse holding a golden cincture; he espoused me and placed the cincture about me, saying: "By this bond I bind and unite you ever more intimately to myself." Then came the dove with the three rays, saying: "I choose you for my friend and for my dwelling, bringing you three loves; namely love of God, of the neighbour, and a holy love of yourself . . . Behold me with you, in you, as your faithful and most powerful friend . . . Be faithful in following my inspirations.'

Domna Maria was not a highly cultured person; her education had not been pursued beyond that common to most pious girls of her time. She had just enough Latin to follow the psalmody, and a rather weak hold on syntax. She was, however, an organist of talent, endowed with a quick intelligence, keen practical sense and innate good taste which would, had it been her lot, have enabled her to come a brilliant scholar. It was precisely on account of her self-diffidence and simplicity that she received so many divine favours. 'Do you know, Maria', said the Lord, 'why I tell you that you are the first among my spouses, the most believed and favoured by me? It is because, knowing your worthlessness, you humble yourself, deeming yourself unworthy to be called my

spouse, and begging instead to be admitted among the number of the lowest slaves . . . The more you will humble yourself, recognizing your nothingness, the more will you be exalted by me.' <sup>2</sup> On another occasion, as the servant of God was lamenting over her misery and weakness, the Lord answered: 'Because you know your unworthiness and confess your weaknesses, I manifest myself to you; my worthiness will make you worthy, my goodness will cover up your poverty, my charity will draw you to me and unite you to Me, for I find my pleasure in you.' 'Lord', said Maria, 'I am so wicked.' 'But I am good. Do not fear; distrust yourself and trust in me.' <sup>3</sup>

Apart from the *Canzoniere*, it was not, therefore, through personal inclination that Domna Maria took up her pen. Successive confessors put her under obedience to keep a detailed written account of her spiritual life. The obedience was irksome in the extreme, and she tried several times, unsuccessfully, to be released from it. In her letters to her spiritual directors, she attempted to explain, as far as she could, the mystical phenomena that came to her, thereby contributing useful information on these difficult matters. In her 'Colloquies', the servant of God recorded the instructions she received from our Lord himself, and the explanations he vouchsafed her of the meaning of her visions. Indeed, much that was given her was not so much for herself personally as a means of teaching others, through her, something of the infinite mercy and love of God for all faithful souls. At times the command to write would come directly from God; to this we owe the works: *The Interior Life of Jesus*, *The Life of St Joseph*, *The Life of John the Baptist*.

The *Canzoniere*, <sup>4</sup> which numbers about a hundred poems, was composed purely as a recreation. Domna Maria was merely giving vent to the feeling that overwhelmed her and was, in no way, aiming at literary perfection. The poems show originality of thought and a real lyrical inspiration, coupled with colourful descriptions and a sincerity of feeling expressed with freshness and charm. After 1731, Domna Maria's different employments did not leave her sufficient leisure to pursue this pastime. The *Canzoniere* includes a series of abstract and mystical concepts of God,

<sup>2</sup> Letter A. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Letter E. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Archiv. Monas.

seventeen in number, expressed in short phrases of not more than four words and bearing the same rhythmical ending:

*Sostanza unica e pura,  
Bontà d'ogni fattura,  
Beltà senza figura,  
Lume fuor di misura, etc.*

Like St Teresa of Avila, Domna Maria was accused of being deceived by the devil; but the more she met with opposition and misunderstanding on the part of men, so much the more did God comfort and instruct her, teaching her the effects of divine love on the faithful soul. This is the subject of her short *Tract on the love of God*,<sup>5</sup> in which she describes how: 'the love of God, being one in its origin, communicates itself to three categories of creatures under the form of three flames, remaining, nevertheless, one perfect love.' The first flame envelops the souls of all the blessed and the angelic spirits, increasing their ardour to love God perfectly. The second flame is directed towards mankind, that 'our hearts may be afire with love of God, that so we may perform great things for his glory'. The third flame envelops the souls in Purgatory, and while it purifies them, it inspires in them an ardent desire to be able to praise the Supreme Good for eternity; it gives them great peace in the midst of their suffering, for they recognize the work of divine justice, and understand how truly God deserves to be loved for his goodness.

Doubtless, the work that best reflects Domna Maria's state of mystical union with God is her commentary on the Cantic of Canticles. Cornelius a Lapide speaks of the double espousals contracted by the Word; physically with his humanity, and morally with the Church by means of his humanity. Departing from the customary interpretation of the poem, which sees in the Spouse Christ our Lord, and the Church, our Lady or the faithful soul in the Beloved, the servant of God interprets the Cantic as an epithalamium between the Word and the humanity he assumed. Humbly she wrote: 'Divine grace will, I hope, assist me, so that I may say all that I learn on this subject . . . for it seems to me most difficult to express the concepts that are impressed upon me, I am so ignorant and have such a poor memory . . .' and she concluded, distressed at her powerlessness to say all she felt, '. . . I have not

<sup>5</sup> Archiv. Monas. Opuscole.

known how to explain myself because of my ignorance. I understood many things. . . but did not know how to explain them. . . . If there is anything good in this work, it is all God's, the errors are my part.' Space does not here permit of a further appreciation of this work which will, it is hoped, form the object of a further article.

At the time of Domna Maria's death a violent discussion arose, fomented chiefly by her adversaries, as to whether or not the servant of God had received the Stigmata. It would seem, from certain passages in the 'Colloquies', that she did. In the second book notably, she wrote that the Lord had told her 'to rest assured that not only will you receive the imprint of your crucified Beloved on the feast of the Holy Ghost, but before your death you will see in your body that which is stamped on your heart; and that which is within will show exteriorly, that is the wounds in your hands, feet and side, on your head the crown of thorns; and you will die bearing the mark of your Beloved, your Redeemer and your Spouse'. Actually, those attending the holy abbess at her death saw nothing of the promised signs, and so wondered. A saintly religious of Viterbo, Padre Colombini, who had had sufficient intercourse with Domna Maria to speak of her *en connaissance de cause*, pointed out that the fact others could not see the Stigmata did not mean that the abbess's imagination had deluded her. The Lord had always spoken in the singular—*tu vedrai*—promising her that she *herself* would see the marks, but never suggesting that they would be for public view; a hidden favour bestowed on other chosen souls.

One thing, however, was certain and clearly visible: the wonderful influence for good exerted by Domna Maria over her monastery and the whole neighbourhood, her patience and charity which never faltered however bitter the attacks against her, and the solid virtues which won for her the esteem and veneration of other saintly souls with whom she came in contact. Through her writings, the holy abbess is now becoming better known, and there is hope that her cause for beatification will soon be introduced.



## POINTS OF VIEW

DEAR REVEREND EDITOR,

I am writing to ask if you would be so good as to give me some help on the question of how to practise charity to our neighbours who are 'neurotics'. People suffering in this way seem to be increasing in numbers so that very few of us live without some contact with them. As it is therefore becoming a general sort of difficulty, it seems a good idea to get some sort of general ruling. Up till now the practice, for the most part, has been either to avoid those who suffer mentally, or to try to bear with them patiently. The first way does not seem altogether charitable, but even if it were, it is not always possible. The second has these difficulties:

(a) Very few people have a nervous system strong enough to cope with a neurotic without undue strain—in fact, without becoming 'infected'.

(b) It seems as if neurotics attach themselves more particularly to sensitive people—who are therefore the most vulnerable.

(c) By its nature this disease makes its victims demand the full and constant attention of their 'audience'; it often becomes almost impossible for any work to get done while they are around—or not properly done.

(d) It sometimes seems as if patience and 'humouring' does no good to the neurotic, but merely increases the selfishness which seems to be the root of the neurosis. (Yet thwarting has frightening effects!)

Meanwhile our Lord has said: 'If anyone demands your coat, give him your cloak too.' And: 'If he compels you to go a mile—go two'. Are mental cases outside this command? (Were there no 'neurotics' in our Lord's day—or did he exorcise them?) What is more—is it safe to suppose that ordinary people can distinguish among their more trying acquaintances as to which are suffering from a disease, and which are merely, say, 'a little liverish'? It needs a certain amount of time, and good judgment, and an unemotional outlook. Which of us are sure we possess these? (Especially after some time spent in the company of a neurotic, one may add!)

I should like to suggest that it might possibly be our modern

form of 'plague'. Perhaps disease has shifted from the body to the mind. In past times certain diseases were considered, quite wrongly, of course, to be a disgrace. Sufferers tried to hide them. Consequently they spread. Once they were forced to come into the open and be treated, some sort of control over the disease itself was gained. In fact, in some cases the disease is well on the way to being eliminated, or has disappeared altogether. Would it not therefore be an act of charity to try to check the spread of this diseased mental condition by some such methods? Neurotics are more than normally concerned with the opinion of others. Particularly they avoid anyone who appears to have discovered their abnormal condition. If the symptoms were sufficiently well known, as to be (safely!) recognized, and if it were the practice to approach them on this delicate subject (instead of pretending it did not exist), might not these people—in desperation, as it were—find themselves forced to take treatment, or try to cure themselves (which goes a long way towards a cure, in this case) and thus in time the disease would become less prevalent?

Meanwhile, please, what must one do here and now, when having to deal with such a sufferer? Should we aim at charity so heroic as to risk, not life, but sanity? Would such an offering be what is required, as sacrifice, for the conquering of the evils which have brought about this state of affairs? Is the foregoing suggestion merely a 'natural' solution, while we who aim at Christian perfection should be willing to forego self-protection, and act super-naturally?

There are several of us who will be truly grateful for an authoritative answer to this problem.

Yours sincerely,

G.H.

### **'The Apostle as Poet'**

TO THE EDITOR, THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT,

One cannot help but feel that Mr Shayer has missed the point of the article on 'The Apostle as Poet'. It is not my wish to attempt to defend Fr Pepler. He is more qualified than I to answer the charges made. While not seeking to arbitrate, perhaps I may be allowed a word on what seems to me a point of some importance. The problem that lies at the heart of all apostolic activity can be

stated in a general way as being one of adaptation: to incarnate eternal truth here and now.

‘Those who deal with doctrine must express themselves in such ways, both in word and writing, that our contemporaries shall understand and listen.’ (Pius XII.)

Cardinal Suhard, in his Pastoral ‘Rise or Decline of the Church’, having stressed that the apostolate must be fully supernatural, goes on to say that it must also be adapted—‘Adaptation does not mean accommodation, or systematically substituting the “new” for the “old”, still less mutilation of the Church’s message, but solely an integral and intelligent “Incarnation” of that message in the actual state of things we have to change. The situation is not always and everywhere the same; and it is this which explains and justifies the fact that the methods of the apostolate change with the times. This fact is so important that it dictates the whole attitude we have to adopt today and the line we have to follow. The first duty which is laid upon us before anything is done is “to sit down and count”, so as to study the conditions which govern the re-Christianization of the world at this present time.’

‘The Christian does not choose his method’, he goes on to say; ‘it is imposed on him by the environment of which he is part, and it is the action of the leaven. . . . His efforts will thus not be directed merely to recruiting others and making the unbeliever “come to him”, but also, and above all, to identifying himself with them in order to save them as they are.’

In his 1949 Pastoral on ‘The Priest in the Modern World’, he has a section on this duty of adaptation. ‘To be a priest of the twentieth century, therefore, does not demand a slavish imitation of methods that were once valuable, nor in introducing new forms as a matter of principle. It means translating the message into contemporary terms. In a word, the priest must adapt himself. It would be a sad mistake (though it is sometimes made) to imagine that this adaptation consists in *imitating* (italics his) slavishly contemporary manners. It does not follow that because a priest uses the latest refinements of technical invention or is up-to-date in the latest publications, that he will have the attention of his people. No doubt, today more than ever, he has the duty of being in the *avant garde* of thought and culture. But if this knowledge does not proceed from, and is not accompanied by, a deeper understanding, which makes him one with the trials and the hopes

of his fellow-men *from within*, (*italics his*) they will never recognize him as one of themselves. But while guarding against a too literal conception of adaptation, we should not fall into an opposite and more serious error: arguing from the fact that because the priest must be all things to all men, that he must remain apart from human particularities. This would be the negation of the principle of St Paul: "With the Jews I lived like a Jew, to win the Jews. . . . With the scrupulous, I behaved myself like one who is scrupulous, to win the scrupulous."'

Surely Mr Shayer does not question this? The whole problem is more complex than he would have us believe, however. There is no blue-print for success. Each must make the necessary adjustments, and we all begin raw. Cardinal Mercier wrote that there were two fundamental sciences for the priest to acquire: he must know the *message* of Christ which he is to give to the people; he must know the *people* who are to receive Christ's message. Yet in a letter to Cardinal Gibbons he confessed, despite his close study of the matter, that he was 'without experience, and more accustomed to discussing ideas and directing an élite than to handling crowds. I knew the world just well enough to realize that I did not know it at all.'

One would have to ignore all the experiments made in recent years and blessed by the Church, indeed, one would have to restrict the idea of the apostolate itself, if one subscribed to some of the views Mr Shayer puts forward.

It would appear that a suspicion of latent anti-intellectualism is involved, though why it should be thought so is not clear.

Is it considered shocking to indicate that even a theologian may not know everything? Theologians are much too sensible people to be hurt by such an evident fact, and it is a fact that a theologian too must be constantly re-learning if he is to be understood and listened to. It was in this context, and it could scarcely be called esoteric, that I read Fr Pepler's article. The tendency to overlook the people in one's concern for the message is actual and needs thought.

We are grateful to God for such men as Damien de Veuster and Fr Ricci and Fr Lebbe, each of whom in such different circumstances showed us the possibilities and gave us a fuller understanding of the apostolate. Damian on Molokai or Charles de Foucauld in Morocco or the Oblates among the Eskimoes may



not appear in the index of a verse anthology, but if Fr Pepler or anyone else wanted to say they are poets I for one would not mind. They all had in common a spark of the divine. They saw Christ afresh and fell captive. 'Poet' seems an apt description for such a one.

ADRIAN DOWLING, O.P.



## REVIEWS

THE CALL OF THE CLOISTER: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND KINDRED BODIES IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION. By Peter F. Anson. (S.P.C.K.; 42s.)

This is a most complete and comprehensive survey of the growth of religious life in the Church of England, and from it, in the Anglican Communion at large. Almost from the Reformation itself there seem to have been yearnings, notably those of John Evelyn and others in the seventeenth century, for a partial restoration of what had been so completely destroyed by Henry VIII, and it is noteworthy that a very un-Protestant aspiration after the ideal of celibacy played no small part in these yearnings. But Nicholas Ferrar's community at Little Gidding remained an isolated instance of anything accomplished in this direction until the establishment of Sisterhoods by Dr Pusey and other early Tractarian leaders in the middle of the nineteenth century.

During the hundred-odd years since these beginnings, numerous communities of men and women have been founded; some now famous, whose life and work continues to exercise a notable influence on the Anglican Communion as a whole, others, now defunct, sometimes with elements in their story that are bizarre and extravagant, as was the experiment of the famous Father Ignatius of Llanthony; and others again, smaller and humble in their accomplishment, little known to the world outside, yet integrated into the widespread religious system that in modern times has grown from the Elizabethan settlement.

Three things will probably surprise Catholics hitherto unacquainted with the complete story here related. The first is the amazing extent to which religious life has developed in the Anglican Communion during the course of a century. The second is its reality and seriousness, and the high aspirations of its asceticism; for the most part we are accustomed to think vaguely of Anglican monks and nuns as people occupied in

elaborate and unconscious play-acting. The third is the almost complete extent to which the whole movement towards religious life, after facing bitter episcopal and other opposition, has now been received into official recognition and indeed favour.

Mr Anson's work has involved an immense amount of patient research, and apart from its interest from other points of view, his book is a valuable contribution to the history of the Church of England, and consequently to the understanding of it. In many cases, especially in those of the larger and better known institutions such as Cowley, Mirfield, Kelham and Wantage, he has been able to write with a fullness which gives us a real insight into their solid worth and their impact upon Anglican life. He himself has a personal and first-hand knowledge of Caldey in its Anglican days and the circumstance of its entry into Catholic unity, together with that of the Benedictine nuns of Mallin and Milford Haven, now at Talacre. His account of the subsequent development of the Caldey remnant, who remained in the Church of England, and the emergence of the Nashdom Community is of special interest.

Mr Anson is consistently objective and factual, and wounding sarcasm is happily absent from his pages. He is to be congratulated on producing a book written by a Catholic, bearing the *imprimatur* of a Catholic bishop, published by a famous Anglican House and dedicated to the Anglican Community of the Resurrection of Mirfield. This is indeed an eirenic gesture, and a sign that the chief aim he has had in writing is to make known to Catholics and others the existence of spiritual realities that we should recognize and welcome in spite of the deep dogmatic differences that separate us.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

THE MONGOL MISSION: NARRATIVES AND LETTERS OF THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES IN MONGOLIA AND CHINA IN THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES. Translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey and edited with an Introduction by Christopher Dawson. (Sheed and Ward; 18s.)

THE LIFE OF ST LOUIS, BY JOHN OF JOINVILLE. Translated by René Hague, from the French text edited by Natalis de Wailly. (Sheed and Ward; 18s.)

Mr Christopher Dawson's 'Makers of Christendom' series, of which the first two volumes, on the Western Fathers and on the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany, were reviewed in this journal last March, goes on from strength to magnificent strength. The third and fourth volumes, published this summer, are a triumphant illustration of the

theme which Mr Dawson has made it his life's work to expound—the impact of Christianity, as both religion and culture, on the civilizations with which it came into contact in the Middle Ages.

In the century covered by these two books, 'the thirteenth, the greatest of centuries', the field is at last almost the whole of the known world. Soon after its beginning, Genghis Khan is capturing Peking in the year of Magna Carta. Just after its ending, mariners are being blown across the Atlantic to a 'New World' that was not even to be given that name for almost another century. And in the middle of this same century, focussed in Europe on the Universities and on the Crusades, a Pope is writing to the Catholic Bishop in (what neither of them called) North America.

The narratives—that of Louis IX's Crusade in 1248, and those of the Missions sent to the Great Khan of Tartary in 1245 by Pope Innocent IV and in 1252 by St Louis himself—are adventure books for all ages. By dint of superb translation from the originals, they manage to give us, even at the humble level of mere human interest, Froissart and Mungo Park and Peter Fleming rolled into one. At the deeper level, of ambassadorial pilgrimage (and it is on this that they have their place in the series of 'Makers of Christendom'), they are altogether central to the purpose of the series. They are bound to have therefore a strong appeal alike to the Christian, the historian and the reading public at large.

John of Joinville's account of the Crusade of 1248, while it has all the blood and thunder of armoured battles against the Saracen, and all the fascinating intimacy of first-hand descriptions of how the knights lived, and what they wore, and how they talked to the King, and how they paid and were paid, never lets one forget (and from the very climate of the story far more than from what it says) that for the King and the author the Crusade was a holy pilgrimage. Similarly the record of the Franciscan John of Plano Carpini, and the Franciscan William of Rubruck who followed him, while they read like the latest Everest books introducing us to the Sherpas, are missionary journeys in every line, with risks and hardships offered up (and even enjoyed) for the glory of God.

Quotation is irresistible. Here is St Louis, about to be ransomed after his capture:

'My Lord Philip of Nemours then told the King that in the count they had cheated the Saracens of one balance of ten thousand pounds. The King was extremely angry and said that he wished the ten thousand pounds to be returned to them, since he had promised to pay two hundred thousand before he left the river. I then trod on my Lord Philip's foot and told the King not to believe him, for he was mistaken, the Saracens being the most skilful reckoners in the

world. My Lord Philip said that I was right and that he had only been joking. The King said that such a joke was untimely. "I order you", he said to my Lord Philip, "on the faith you owe me, being my own man, to see that they are made up in full".

Here is Joinville on the beleaguered camp:

'During the whole of Lent we ate no fish except eels. . . . The Turks, in order to starve us out, took some of their galleys from above our camp—which was a surprise to many—dragged them over land, and placed them a good league below the camp, in the river which was our communication with Damietta. These galleys caused a famine. . . . We knew nothing of this blockade until a small vessel belonging to the Count of Flanders, which eluded them with the help of the current, brought us the news. . . . Prices in the camp rose so much as a result of this that by Easter an ox cost eighty pounds, a sheep thirty, an egg twelve deniers, and a measure of wine ten pounds.'

Or this, during the journey out of the Franciscans:

'On Easter Sunday we said office and made some kind of a meal, and then, together with the two Tartars who had been assigned to us by Corenza, we left with many tears, for we knew not whether we were going to death or to life. We were so weak we could hardly ride. During the whole of that Lent our food had been nothing but millet with water and salt, and it was the same on other fast days, and we had nothing to drink except snow melted in a kettle.'

The highlight of the whole series so far, with the possible exception of St Willibald's journey to the Holy Land in the second volume (last year), is William of Rubruck's account of his final interview with Mangu Khan in person, before returning to France. It radiates all the oriental majesty and self-sufficiency that Lord Macartney was to find still robust in China at the time of the French Revolution. Rarely, too, can the Holy See have been addressed in quite the egalitarian way that the Khan adopted in replying to Innocent IV's first mission: 'If you wish to have peace with us, your Pope and all kings and potentates, in no way delay to come to me to make terms of peace and then you shall hear our answer and our will. . . . You men of the West believe that you alone are Christians and despise others. But how can *you* know to whom God deigns to confer his grace? We worshipping God have destroyed the whole earth from the East to the West in the power of God.'

St Louis got a better deal: 'You will go to that French King, to whom this man will take you, and you will present him with these things on my behalf. If he wishes to be at peace with us, we will seize the territory from the Saracens as far as his kingdom, and we concede to him the rest of the world westwards. . . .'



This dream, of a Christian-Mongol alliance to destroy the power of Islam, crops up again and again in both books. The mutual embassies from Pope and King to the Khans entertained it; Louis IX is receiving Tartar envoys on the same theme while on his Crusade; and a King of Armenia had made himself intermediary. Mr Dawson's introductory chapter carries the history of this dream to the point at which, towards the end of the century, Edward I of England is the only Western leader in whom the dynamism survives to go on hoping for it. And even he is distracted away by the 'domestic' feuds that were then weakening Christendom, to its own disedification and the glee of its enemies.

A. C. F. BEALES

THE COUNTRY YEAR. By Jorian Jenks (S.P.C.K.; 3s. 6d.)

Mr Jorian Jenks, well known to readers of *The Tablet* and to all interested in country things as Editor of *Mother Earth* and *Rural Economy*, has written the letterpress of this little book beautifully illustrated with photographs of the English rural scene. Coming from an Anglican, it must make many Catholics envious. For though we share with the Church of England the sad fate that most of our people have been urbanized for so many generations that they have lost all touch with natural things, yet the English Church has still a strong background of simple rural life for millions of its members, while we have scarcely any.

Plough Sunday through Lent to Mothering Sunday and Lady Day, Easter, May Day, Rogation Sunday, when God's blessing is asked for crops, St John's Eve (when the calves that had been put to graze down the young wheat must be turned out on the leys, as the leases granted by the old Abbeys dictated) through High Summer to Harvest Thanksgiving, and Michaelmas, when contracts terminate, to the Christmas festivals that mark a time of ease and rejoicing for farmer and helpers, 'the Real and the Ideal are inextricably blended in a natural catholicism of faith'.

The author has no silly nostalgia for a rural Merry England that has been destroyed and will probably never be restored. Mr Jorian Jenks, without drawing a top-line salary in high places, is one of our soundest agronomists: that is to say he knows the countryman and he knows economics. The solutions he offers to remedy the divorce of men and women from elemental things are hinted at in this booklet and may be found *in extenso* in his other writings, notably in *Feeding the Fifty Million*, report of the Rural Reconstruction Committee, under his editorship (Hollis and Carter). To check the drift from country to town, and even to reverse it, he has suggested better rural housing and amenities, encouragement to smallholders, a new system of taxation

for the farmer, and, *pace* Mr Colin Clark, stabilization of prices for the producer of the food stuffs this country needs and is able, in great proportion, to grow for itself.

A good deal depends on a new outlook, away from the meretricious attraction of 'spending-money', cinemas and dance halls, back to a more sound and healthy way of life. It is one of our Catholic tragedies that our immigrant and settled Irish, peasants often by tradition, could scarcely care less about the land. While many others spend their spare time on allotments, few of our town Catholics are found to do so. Possibly centuries of repression and rack-renting have made them sick of the land and its labours. This book, if only they would read it, is calculated to make some of them change their minds.

DR A. G. BADENOCH

THE MYTH OF THE ETERNAL RETURN. By Mircea Éliade. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 18s.)

SPIRIT AND NATURE. Papers from the Eranos Year Books. Edited by Joseph Campbell. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 35s.)

It is curious how often fresh fields of study are opened up in which it is prophesied that Christianity will sink to destruction, and then it is discovered that those very fields provide a rich harvest for Christians. Comparative religion, in the days of Frazer, was thought to be a threat to Christian claims. In the age of Éliade comparative religion is found to be a boon to Christians, not only in apologetics but in the more important matter of enabling them to appreciate and live their own faith more profoundly. This should certainly be the case with the first of Éliade's books translated into English.

The myth of the eternal return is shown to be the means by which archaic man protects himself from the 'terror of history', a terror to which modern non-Christians are increasingly exposed, and which drives them in increasing numbers to despair. It is from the contrast between these two responses to the 'terror of history' that the uniqueness and originality of the Christian's response springs to light. Seen in this light the Christian faith is displayed as a great adventure in freedom, a source of power and exhilaration. I cannot imagine any educated Christian who would not grasp the implications of his faith more firmly through studying this fine work of Éliade's.

I wish I could speak with equal warmth of the Eranos volume as a whole, but I cannot do so; for although the individual contributions are, for the most part, excellent, they do not constitute that 'Shared Feast' which the Editor claims them to be. This is not surprising, since the meanings attributed to 'spirit' are so various—I am by no

means sure that Jung means the same thing by that word in 'The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales' (the first contribution) as he does in 'The Spirit of Psychology' (the last essay in the book). Nevertheless, if these essays are taken separately they are most rewarding, and if I may be allowed to single out several that I found particularly helpful I would note *The Transformation of the Spirit in the Renaissance* by Werner Kaegi, *Galileo and Newton* by Friedrich Dessauer, and *The Spirit of Science* by Edwin Schrödinger.

DONALD NICHOLL

#### LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS:

AUGUSTINE'S LATER WORKS. Translated by J. Burnaby.

CONFESSIONS AND ENCHIRIDION. Translated by A. C. Outler. (S.C.M. Press; 30s. each.)

Would that every translator of the Fathers, ere he commenced his labours, formally abjured, renounced, and eschewed all manner of archaism, lest it be suggested thereby to the modern reader that the thought of the said Fathers is as outmoded as the English wherein they are rendered. Both these translations, albeit accurate as befitteth the work of scholars, suffer from this defect. Dr Outler, in the *Enchiridion*, uses 'speaks' and 'speaketh', 'does' and 'doth', etc., with a fine indifference and no discernible method withal. Professor Burnaby has a weakness for subjunctives, shrinks not from the ancient mode of negating verbs, and takes pleasure in the odd 'whereto'.

All this is a pity, because these are both very useful volumes, especially the *Later Works*. This contains the *Trinity*, Books 8-15, in which Augustine explores the trinitarian image in the soul; *The Spirit and the Letter*, and the *Homilies on I John*. In an excellent introduction to the *Trinity* Professor Burnaby summarizes the doctrine of the books not translated, and explains the niceties of the theological terms employed.

Both translators are tempted in their introductions to oversimplify. According to Professor Burnaby, Augustine holds that the opposition of letter and spirit (II Cor. 3: 6) is not one of literal and allegorical interpretation of Scriptures. But this is inaccurate. Augustine says that this is not the only meaning of the passage, nor the one that concerns him. He does not deny that it is *a* meaning. A much more flagrant 'simplisme' is Dr Outler's, who saddles Augustine with double predestination and irresistible grace. Now that is sheer calumny; irresistible grace—perhaps, with qualifications; but *not* double predestination. For Augustine, predestination is a step to glorification, inseparably associated with grace, God's free gift. Predestination to damnation would be an absurdity, as though damnation involved some sort of real anti-grace, a back-handed gift of God as undeserved as its

gracious counterpart. But good heavens, the man was a Christian, not the fabricator of any such grotesque symmetries as double predestination. 'This grim topic', shudders Dr Outler; 'a doctrine of grace imprisoned in a rigid logic', nods Professor Burnaby. But surely the Pelagian doctrine of unmitigated justice is really far grimmer, and its logic much more stiffly artificial than Augustine's defence of grace, which is the co-efficient of mercy. That the final grace of salvation is not in fact granted to all was not invented by Augustine, but found by him in the tradition, and shared with him by his opponents. The truth cannot be served by sweeping him off into any such generalizations.

Professor Burnaby is least acceptable from the Catholic, not to say historical, point of view in his introduction to the *Homilies on I John*. The matter in hand is the anti-Donatist polemic. The Professor's sympathies are clearly with the schismatics, the 'Covenanters' of the late Empire, standing out against the official conformity. Augustine, it is suggested, was obliged to give many a deft twist to received orthodoxy in order to make good the Catholic case. His distinction between the efficacy and the validity of the sacraments administered outside the Church has been almost exactly reversed, we are told, in modern thought; Catholics will now recognize that such sacraments have some efficacy in their fruits, though being invalid in the sense of irregular. Ingenious, and just a little disingenuous.

The fact is of course that Augustine is not regarded as an authority by either of his translators. Nor is it realized that he himself was a man under authority, the Church's authority, and saw himself as such, and that it was in that role he took up the cudgels against his opponents, the Donatists above all. For, as in any schism, the question at issue was which side was being true to tradition, and had the authority of tradition behind it. Both claimed the distinction. Professor Burnaby, by suggesting that Augustine and the 'Catholic' party (his inverted commas) were the innovators, appears to see in the Donatists the direct and genuine heirs of the apostolic tradition; which is, as a matter of mere history, rash.

E.H.

THE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY OF ST BERNARD. By E. Gilson. Translated by A. H. C. Downes. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

It is pleasant, after fifteen years, to have a reprint of M. Gilson's *Mystical Theology of St Bernard*, translated by A. H. C. Downes. This edition is a pleasure to handle as the print and binding are both excellent. One regrets the omission of the frontispiece to the French edition (mentioned in the present text in Appendix I, p. 157) which is a



reproduction of a charming Roman mosaic depicting a skeleton lying on one elbow and bearing the caption '*Nosce Teipsum*'.

St Bernard's mystical theology is based on the premises that man is made in the Image and Likeness of God. Even after sin he retains the Image, that is freewill and reason, but he has lost the Likeness, namely the power always to choose the good and to carry it out. All St Bernard's teaching is directed towards showing man how he may emerge from the *Regio Dissimilitudinis* and regain the lost Likeness. John Donne, nearly four hundred years later, seems to put forward the same idea, although he uses the word Image where St Bernard would have used Likeness:

Burn off my rusts, and my deformity,  
Restore thine Image so much by thy grace,  
That thou may'st know me,—

(Good Friday, 1613. *Riding Westward*.)

M. Gilson with his usual brilliant clarity, has reduced the copious Bernardine texts to a comparatively brief and coherent synthesis, amply illustrated by selections from the Saint's works. The appendices are as interesting as the thesis, particularly those dealing with William of St Thierry and the problem of St Bernard's possible connection with Courtly Love.

A word of criticism concerning the translation; was it really necessary to translate *volonté propre* (*voluntas propria*) and *conseil propre* (*proprium concilium*) as 'proper will' and 'proper counsel' respectively? Especially as later on *sens propre* (*sensum proprium*) is rendered as 'our own opinion'.

A. J. MEIKLE.

LA MESSE: LES CHRÉTIENS AUTOUR DE L'AUTEL. Par Les Prêtres de la communauté sacerdotale de Saint-Séverin. (Desclée de Brouwer; n.p.)

In 1948 Cardinal Suhard appointed a group of five diocesan priests to the parish of Saint-Séverin, with a mixed congregation of rich, poor, teachers, students, intellectuals, workers. Their task was to establish unity and some sense of community in this crowded district of Paris whose inhabitants were spiritually and intellectually isolated from one another. They began with themselves; though they are in no sense a religious order they live as a community, discussing and planning their work together and, more important, praying together. Three times a day they sing office in church: Prime in the morning, Sext at midday and Vespers and Compline in the evening. The people's liturgy is the Mass and after instruction the congregation began to take an active part. This book is the fruit of all that work: the first half is the instructions and the second an account of the practice. Dialogue

Mass is only a beginning; the whole physical behaviour of the congregation is made an organic part of the Mass. At the *Confiteor*, for instance, in a High Mass, they turn and answer the priest standing at the bottom of the nave. Likewise the collection is graciously incorporated into the liturgy: on entering church you make your offering and, if you wish to communicate, place a host in a ciborium; at the Offertory the Deacon takes both the ciborium and the collection up to the sanctuary. This is an example of the combined idealism and realism of these fine priests. There is no high-minded humbug and the parish priest says, quite simply, they need the collection and so it must be made part of the sacrifice of the Mass. It is quite remarkable how the priests (they all share anonymously the writing of this book as they have shared its preaching and broadcasting) make the reader feel the life of the liturgy; the impact of the spoken and broadcast word must have been very great indeed. It must be emphasized that here is no Gallic eccentricity; these things are done with the authority of the Church and should be widely known and, I believe, imitated, because the results speak for themselves.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART. By Louis Verheylezoon, S.J. (Sands; 15s.)

In this work, it is the intention of the author to treat of 'Devotion to the Sacred Heart', in all its various aspects, and yet present it in an orderly manner so that it will appear as a logical whole. This is a difficult task when dealing with a devotion which, as Pius XI said, contains 'the summary of the whole religion, and the rule of a life of greater perfection'. The author can be said to have achieved this task, and to have presented us with a scholarly synthesis.

The book first deals with the objects of the devotion, showing that the ultimate, general and principal object is the Person of Jesus, and that the special and direct object was indicated by his words, 'Behold this heart which has so loved men'. The author then deals with the secondary objects of the devotion, and the love Christ bears us in his divine nature. There follows a chapter on the principal and secondary purposes of the devotion, and nearly a hundred pages on its practice. There are two appendices: the first treats of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the second treats of various associations in honour of the Sacred Heart.

The author is obviously very familiar with the best literature on the subject. This enables him to use many citations which are apt, authoritative and compelling. When there is room for his own opinion, he leaves us in no doubt as to what it is. The fact that he has concentrated

on that special aspect of the cult, as developed by St Margaret Mary, unifies rather than restricts his treatment. The section of the work dealing with the object of the devotion is the most fundamental and the most precisely expressed. In dealing with the practice of the devotion he embraces much that will be of interest and help to one's spiritual life generally. He is particularly helpful when treating of the practice of affective love; of the true nature of consecration; of reparation, and confidence in Christ.

Fr Verheylezoon does not himself consider this a 'devotional book'. He tells us, 'It is a book of study. It is intended for all those—priests, religious and laymen—who wish to acquire a reasoned and exhaustive knowledge of the great devotion of modern times.' But it may well be that many will find the precision of thought and language a greater help to devotion than the extravagant expressions to be found in many 'devotional books' on this subject.

There is a foreword by C. C. Martindale, S.J., which adds to the value of an already excellent book on the devotion of which St Margaret wrote, 'I know of no other devotion better calculated to lead a soul, in so short a time, to the pinnacle of perfection'.

SIDNEY F. BREEN

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS. By Caryll Houselander. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)

A feeling that compassion is the only thing that counts invades the reader of this powerful series of thoughts on the sufferings of our Blessed Lord. Caryll Houselander's one theme was that in the suffering of man the suffering of Christ continues. In this section of her inexhaustible exposition of it she stresses that our Lord suffered in us all, for us all, with us all, by anticipation, everything that we suffer, and that because he suffers it (for Calvary is timeless) *we* are Christ suffering. It is one of the richest veins of real spirituality that can be tapped. The authoress surely lived these thoughts and gave them their convincing, penetrating quality from her own experience and her own soul. Like every deep truth about our Lord, this theme is prolific. The ideas that come unasked to the mind, as one follows and ponders, are many and helpful. The meditations on Simon of Cyrene and Veronica are outstanding.

To each meditation is added a prayer in rhythmic prose, worthy of the subject, rounding off the meditation, putting into words for us the thoughts and feeling born of our meditation. In the meditations we have pictures, partial but effective, of what happened. In the prayers Caryll Houselander seems to say to us: 'Now this is what you must

say.' That she is so often right, even in the detail of the phrases, is a measure of the spiritual sympathy of this book.

The illustrations, fourteen, black-and-white from wood-cuts also made by Caryll Houselander, seal the unity of the theme. Stark and dark at first glance, they grow on you as the meditation sinks in. Even the Fourth Station, where our Lady is made taller than our Lord, is a perfect vehicle of the thought and feeling of the text.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

NEW LIGHT ON THE PASSION OF OUR DIVINE LORD. By Rev. Patrick O'Connell, B.D. (Gill; 7s. 6d.)

Father O'Connell gives us the story of the Holy Shroud of Turin and collates its evidence of our Lord's sufferings with the details given in the visions of St Bridget of Sweden, the Venerable Maria d'Agreda, Anne Catherine Emmerich and Teresa Neumann. There are ten illustrations, of which one is of the Crucifixion in accordance with these five sources of evidence. A stirring of devotion by means of a mental and visual representation of what happened—such is the purpose of the book. It will surely be attained for most readers. Imagination shrinks from the details of the Passion. This book dwells on them.

Two things attract a serious reader of such a book: Is the Shroud genuine? Is it reliable as a source of points for meditation on the Passion? Father O'Connell takes it as a sort of fifth Gospel and argues strongly for its absolute certainty. Here he is persuasive, but a clearer presentation and arrangement of the evidence and the illustrations would be required to bring conviction to the critical reader. His strongest argument is, after all, the fact that over twenty years of intensive study by impartial scientific workers have shown the supernatural character of the Shroud. In the words of Pope Pius XI: 'The Holy Shroud of Turin is still mysterious, but it is certainly not the work of any human hand. This, one can now say, is demonstrated. We said mysterious because the sacred object still involves many problems, but certainly it is more sacred than perhaps any other; and, as is now established in the most positive way, even apart from any idea of faith or Christian piety, it is certainly not a human work.' It follows that we may safely use it in our reconstruction of the scene on Calvary. The resultant impression of what our Lord suffered is shocking beyond words. The additional details from the mystics can be ignored. They do help, but they also distract. The Shroud itself is a book of the sufferings of Christ, evidence pathetic and eternal of his immeasurable love for us.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.



THE OUR FATHER. By R. H. J. Steuart, s.j. (Blackfriars Publications; 2s.)

A paragraph from Fr Steuart's conferences is often enough to keep us going for a week or two. Here we have thirty-six pages of quite irresistible spiritual teaching, practical, real, coming from the heart and going to the heart. But Fr Steuart was not just a devotional preacher. His thoughts were penetrating because they were, so largely, theology in other words: 'piquant' is a tempting adjective to add, if it were less undignified. These conferences, originally published in various issues of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, give us Fr Steuart's thoughts on the greatest of prayers and show that our Lord, in teaching us to pray, was teaching us to know and to love God as our Father. The first brief conference, entitled 'Our Father', is indispensable for all who are not yet convinced that 'Perfect love casteth out fear'.

Father Conrad Pepler's preface introduces us not only to the conferences but also to the mind and heart of Fr Steuart.

G.M.C.

A SAINT OF THE WEEK. By Desmond Murray, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications, 15s.)

Only a Dominican could have written this. Perhaps 'friendly learning' is the nearest phrase to describe the tone and atmosphere: the subject matter itself—lessons of true piety woven round forty-eight brief lives of saints—is presented in a way that ensures gentle effective enlivening of that deep, everyday, 'catechism' holiness to which every soul of man responds. There is nothing like doctrine for setting us off on the great trail, and after doctrine comes learning, and after learning comes emotional atmosphere. All three are best combined, for most people, in simple straightforward talks which give us something to chew on, informative and by preference factual. Father Murray has given us exactly this in these admirable sermon-sketches of forty-eight saints.

G.M.C.

## NOTICES

THE FOLLOWING FEET, by 'Ancilla' (Longmans; 8s. 6d.), as may be guessed, is another tale of the Hound of Heaven chasing his prey. This time his prey is a 'good pagan' who received at the age of forty-three one of those strange mystical experiences of 'the timeless moment'—an experience which is always difficult to class as 'natural' or 'super-

natural'. That was in 1934. By 1947 Ancilla was a convinced and ardent Anglican. This is a true account of a progress from agnosticism to Christianity, related with the help of diaries, well and vividly told.

In *THE GOLDEN MAN* (Blackfriars; 7s. 6d.) Fr Anthony Ross, O.P., has adapted some of the best stories of Bl. James of Voragine's *Golden Legend*. 'Legends', as Fr Ross says, 'are not pious nonsense, but attempts to say by means of symbols things which seem to defeat any other means of expression.' The 'thing' here attempted is the picture of 'the ideal Christian' in the stories of ten early saints. The telling of these tales is charmingly done and may be read by children or adults, not merely for their entertainment but, as the author suggests, as a way of listening to a compelling preacher leading his hearers on towards the ideal Christian. The book is delicately illustrated by Mary Taylor.

Readers of *THE LIFE* will need no introduction to John M. Todd's *WE ARE MEN* (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.) as the second chapter, 'Husbands and Wives', was published in its entirety in the January 1955 issue of this journal. It is a book by a layman specifically for laymen. He has the advantage of talking to men of the present age with a sense of experiences shared with them; and he thus avoids the doctrinaire and abstract view of the Christian life. He attempts to bridge the gap between nature and supernature in treating of the problems of the modern Christian. In this way his book is a pioneer one which we hope will lead to more developed treatment on the same lines of the family, work, leisure and religion which make up the four main sections of the book—all regarded as the apostolate.

*DAYS OF JOY* by William Stephenson, S.J. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 8s. 6d.), consists of a series of meditations on the forty days of Eastertide. There is a great deal of useful matter in the book, but it seems to have neglected most of the renewed and vital understanding of the Paschal Mystery in its liturgical setting.

*THE CORPORAL PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST*, by Dr Pierre Barbet, has been bound together in a little book with Robert Hugh Benson's meditation on *HOLY WEEK* and published by Clonmore and Reynolds (2s. 6d.). The first essay, already noticed in this journal, is the work of a surgeon considering the Passion from his own scientific standpoint, the second a meditation written before Mgr Benson became a Catholic.

*ST MEINRAD'S ABBEY*, Indiana, has published a volume of essays on the priesthood to commemorate the 1,800 priests trained there in the past century. The essays, though uneven in quality, cover many aspects of the priest's life and are well worth reading, at least by the clergy.

## EXTRACTS

ANOTHER SPIRITUAL REVIEW from America is a sign of the times, for its purpose is contemplative, which reminds of the great contemplative movement that is gathering momentum in the States. Its name is *Spiritual Life* and it is edited like so many other reviews of this nature by Carmelites—a quarterly published by Bruce of Milwaukee. Some of the aims and ideals of *Spiritual Life* read rather naively, but we quote from the prospectus confident that people will know how to read between the lines:

Its purpose will be to reach or form a 'spiritual élite' (élite does not mean an esoteric class, but rather all those who are willing to make a colossal effort to lead vigorous Catholic lives). . . .

*Spiritual Life* has a new scope, a scope that goes beyond the ordinary pre-occupation of writing in this country; a scope that embraces far more than enticements to religion or to threshold activities of the Church. Here is a review concerned with the deepest and most pressing verities of life. Here is a map of life formed out of writing that is clear, vital and precise, written against the background of Theology, Philosophy, Psychology and the rich tradition of Carmel.

A summation of objectives is as follows:

1. To stimulate thought. 2. To 'think' the world. 3. To 'make' contemplatives. 4. To transmit our heritage (Teresian spirituality). 5. To provide spiritual direction for an élite, for leaders and for all who desire to intensify their spiritual lives.

We wish our new sister every success, and it will be interesting to be taught how to 'think' the world.

ANOTHER REVIEW, this time non-Catholic, intended for the lay Christian and hitherto obtained by direct subscription, is now planning 'a nation-wide coverage'. *The Layman*—'Linking Christianity with Citizenship', edited by Patrick Hamilton and published from 35 Spring Gardens, London, S.W.1 (1s. 6d. a month), claims to be 'inter-denominational, non-sectarian and non-profit making, with no special axes to grind'. Its June number stars Billy Graham, publishing his six short broadcasts in the 'Life Up Your Hearts' series. Another broadcast talk on 'Christians in a Divided World' about Africa is also published, showing how Christianity can dispel fear which is a principal cause of political and social divisions.

That lesson has been finely taught us by the Kikuyu Christians. You may perhaps have heard of the message of one of them sent to Christians here who were praying for them. 'Don't pray that we



may be kept safe; pray that we may be kept faithful.' These Kikuyu Christians, martyrs many of them, are of the same people as the Mau Mau who murder them, so you can't indict a people. . . . It's off the essence of Christianity to react against fear and against selfishness. . . . And Christians can do a tremendous lot if they can adopt the motto which Jan Hofmeyr, the greatest South African leader, commended to his fellow countrymen: 'Resist the pressure of fear; hold fast to the profession of your faith, without wavering'.

It will be seen that the tone of this review is Evangelical—little doctrine with great moral urge; but it will encourage many to be better Christians.

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